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Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-96-146
Monday
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Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

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Inter-Arab Affairs

Inter-Arab Affairs: Arab League Chief on Peace Delay, U.S. Role

NC2807151696 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1205 GMT 28 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Beirut, 28 Jul (MENA)—Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid has warned that acts of violence and counter violence will increase in the region. He noted that this will be one consequence of the freezing of the Middle East peace process because of Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's rejection of the land-for-peace principle and his government's refusal to implement the relevant UN resolutions, on which the Madrid conference was based, and the agreements signed by the former Israeli government with the Palestinian self-rule authority.

In an exclusive interview given to MENA's Beirut correspondent prior to his departure from the Lebanese capital for Damascus today, 'Abd-al-Majid said that if the peace process collapses this will serve the interest of neither the Arab countries nor Israel. He described the current stage as very difficult and said it causes worry about the future of peace in the region.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid said he expects a total halt to the peace negotiations for the next four or five months. He voiced hope, however, that President Husni Mubarak's political moves in several regional and foreign capitals will help contain the negative repercussions of the freezing of the peace process and help resume the negotiations after the U.S. Presidential election.

He confirmed that President Mubarak, as chairman of the Arab summit, is playing a vital role in confronting the dangers besetting the peace operation through his contacts, travels, and meetings with the leaders of the countries concerned with the peace issue, including Israel and the United States.

'Abd-al-Majid noted that Mubarak's current visit to Washington is part of these efforts. He explained that Mubarak will convey to Washington the consensual Arab position that was formulated at the Cairo Arab summit emphasizing the Arab determination to view peace as a strategic option on condition that it be comprehensive and just and based on the principles of the Madrid conference and the land-for-peace principle. He explained that the Arabs reject any attempt to propagate an alternative peace-for-peace proposal.

Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid declared that the current difficult stage through which the peace process is passing requires full Arab cohesion and coordination and constant consultations among the Arab leaders in order to rise above minor disputes, nurture Arab solidarity, and resist any attempt to infiltrate the Arab front.

He added that the meetings held in the region in the wake of the Cairo summit among several Arab leaders, including Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad's meetings with Jordan's King Husayn and Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat, represent an important step at the beginning of an extensive and continuing phase of inter-Arab reconciliation. 'Abd-al-Majid noted that this restores Arab unity of views, which is necessary for confronting current regional and international transformations.

He called on all the Arab countries to support the firm position adopted by Syria and Lebanon on the peace process and their demand for unconditional Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights and south Lebanon.

In his interview with MENA's correspondent in Beirut, 'Abd-al-Majid stressed the importance of and the need for the Lebanese and Syrian tracks in the peace process to run together. He said the firm Syrian stand enhances and supports Lebanon's demand to regain its occupied territory.

He added that his talks with Lebanese officials during the last three days demonstrated to him Lebanon's eagerness to pursue the peace process in full coordination with Syria and to its commitment to implementing the Cairo Arab summit's resolutions.

He said he sensed that these officials were worried because of a possible escalation of the Israeli acts of aggression against south Lebanon. But at the same time, he remarked, they insist on continuing national resistance against the Israeli occupation forces until a complete, unconditional pullout from Lebanese territory is effected an accordance with Security Council Resolution 425.

The Arab League secretary general pointed out that there is a consensus among the Lebanese officials that the Israeli proposal of a partial withdrawal from Lebanon is an Israeli trap to cause a rift between Lebanon and Syria and that they reject this proposal.

Commenting on the U.S. stand, 'Abd-al-Majid said that, even though it is unable to put effective pressure on Israel during the U.S. election campaign, still the United States is eager to continue the peace process and it is playing a helpful and necessary role in this respect. He referred to the letters sent by U.S. President Clinton to Arab leaders a few days ago renewing Washington's commitment to the Madrid resolutions and the principle of land for peace.

'Abd-al-Majid expressed interest in the meetings he is to hold with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad and senior Syrian officials during his visit to Damascus. During this visit, he will learn the Syrian leadership's assessment of the developments in the region and the outcome of the Syrian president's meetings with the Jordanian king and the Palestinian president. He will also discuss the possibility of implementing the Arab summit resolutions and the results of recent Arab moves in the region.

During his visit to Lebanon which, he began on Thursday [25 July], Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid met with Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi, Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies Nabih Birri, and Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri. He also held talks with Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz.

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat, U.S. Coordinator Ross Discuss Regional Issues

JN2607184696 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1800 GMT 26 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat met with Dennis Ross, Middle East peace coordinator, on the Palestinian side of Bayt Hanun crossing this afternoon. The president and Ross held a closed meeting first and were later joined by Dr. Nabil Sha'th, minister of planning and international cooperation; Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat, minister of local government; and Nabil Abu-Rudaynah, his excellency the president's adviser. On the U.S. side, the meeting was attended by the delegation accompanying Ross and Edward Abington, U.S. consul general in occupied Jerusalem.

Discussions centered on the latest developments in the region. The U.S. coordinator briefed President 'Arafat on the results of his tour of the region and meetings with officials in Israel, Syria, and Jordan.

Palestinian Affairs: Ross Meets 'Arafat, Acknowledges 'Difficulties'

JN2607205296 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 2000 GMT 26 Jul 96

[Report by Basim Abu-Sumayyah from "the Palestinian territories"]

[FBIS Translated Text] U.S. envoy Dennis Ross and Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat met in a tense atmosphere today after Israel imposed a blanket siege on Palestinian territories after last night's armed attack that killed two Israelis and wounded a third near West Jerusalem.

Following his two-hour meeting with 'Arafat, Ross acknowledged the existence of difficulties on the way to resuming Palestinian-Israeli negotiations. He said: After discussions with 'Arafat, I have learned that there are problems that should be solved.

Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat pointed out that the meeting gave him a chance to discuss many topics in detail, foremost of which are protecting and promoting the peace process, as well as ways to resume the final-status negotiations on the Palestinian track.

'Arafat is due to chair a meeting of the PLO Executive Committee to discuss the current situation in the Palestinian arena and to acquaint the PLO Executive Committee members with details of his meeting with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, Israeli Foreign Minister David Levi, and U.S. envoy Dennis Ross.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat To Visit Saudi Arabia 28 Jul

JN2707190296 Gaza Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 27 Jul 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat will leave for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on 28 July to hold talks with King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz and Crown Prince 'Abdallah.

Mustafa al-Shaykh Dhib, Palestinian ambassador to Saudi Arabia, said that during his two-day visit, the president will brief the Saudi officials on the latest developments in the Palestine question. He praised Saudi Arabia's support for the Palestine question and Palestinian rights, particularly the issue of holy Jerusalem.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat, Delegation Leave for Saudi Arabia

JN2807131796 Gaza Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation Television Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 28 Jul 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat left for Jeddah today on a visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, during which he will meet with Saudi King Fahd Bin 'Abd-al-'Aziz and Crown Prince 'Abdallah Bin 'Abd-al-'Aziz. President 'Arafat will brief the Saudi officials on the deteriorating economic situation in Palestine as a result of the Israeli siege, unemployment, Israeli measures against the holy city, and the settlement drive.

The talks will also deal with the latest developments in the peace process, particularly on the Palestinian-Israeli track in light of the policy of the new Israeli Government.

President 'Arafat is accompanied by an official delegation that includes Mahmud 'Abbas, secretary of the PLO Executive Committee; al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, secretary general of the presidency; Ahmad 'Abd-al-Rahman, secretary general of the cabinet; and Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat, minister of local government.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Urges Moroccan King To Hold Meeting on Jerusalem

JN2707203096 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1800 GMT 27 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat called on Moroccan King Hassan II to hold a meeting in which the Jerusalem Committee will discuss dangers threatening the holy city as a result of Israeli violations in the city.

In a speech he delivered during a memorial service for the two martyrs Abu-'Ali Iyad and Abu-Sabri [not further identified] in Gaza this evening, the president said that what is happening on the ground in terms of settlement activity and attacks on holy places raises questions and suspicions.

President 'Arafat said that Jerusalem is Palestine's eternal capital. He reiterated the National Authority's commitment to peace, noting that the PLO participated in the Madrid conference on the land-for-peace basis.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Briefs PLO-Cabinet Session on Syria Visit

JN2707065896 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0500 GMT 27 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat chaired a joint meeting of the PLO Executive Committee and the cabinet at the Presidency in Gaza last night. The joint meeting discussed the results of President 'Arafat's visit to Latakia and his meeting with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, Arab and international efforts to push forward the peace march in the region, the tight military siege on the various Palestinian governorates, and Israeli attacks on Islamic institutions in occupied Jerusalem.

Palestinian Affairs: Abu-Rudaynah Comments on 'Arafat's 'Successful' Syria Visit

JN2607133496 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1120 GMT 26 Jul 96

[Statement by Nabil Abu-Rudaynah, adviser to Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat, on 26 July; from the "Today's Events" program — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] The meeting between President Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] and President al-Asad was successful and positive. The meeting was meant for consultations and coordination, especially in the wake of the successful summit in Cairo and the tripartite meeting among Abu-'Ammar, President Husni Mubarak, and President al-Asad. This is a new stage of Arab solidarity, coordination of stands, and consultations to face the challenges to the Arab nation. The purpose of the visit was to achieve a unified Arab view, stemming from the Cairo summit resolutions, based on a just and comprehensive peace and security for all parties. This peace must be based on the land-for-peace principle. These are the foundations of a just and comprehensive peace on all Arab tracks. The Arabs and the international community accepted the Madrid terms, on whose basis the Arabs launched peace negotiations. These negotiations are based on land for peace, peace and security for everyone, and no partition of peace and security. All occupied Arab territories must be returned, including holy Jerusalem, the capital of Palestine, the Golan, and the Lebanese territory. Palestinian meetings and consultations with Syria, Egypt, Jordan, and the rest of the Arab world are expected to continue on the basis of the Cairo summit resolutions, through which the Arab nation emphasized the constants of a just and comprehensive peace. Palestinian and Arab efforts in the next stage will depend on these bases.

Palestinian Affairs: Minister Discusses 'Arafat-al-Asad Talks

JN2707093696 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0420 GMT 27 Jul 96

[Telephone interview with Yasir 'Amr, PA minister of education who accompanied 'Arafat on his 25 July visit to Syria, in Gaza, by Fathi al-Barqawi in Jericho; from the "A New Day" program—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Barqawi] Good morning, Brother Abu-Tha'ir [Yasir 'Amr].

['Amr] Good morning

[Al-Barqawi] The 'Arafat-al-Asad meeting in Latakia was very significant, coming years after the two presidents had their last official meeting. What were the most important topics discussed?

['Amr] The meeting was cordial and warm. The delegation was received at Latakia airport. We then went to meet with President al-Asad. Talks dealt with the Israeli policy changes, especially under the Likud. It was agreed that this requires a unified Arab stand and cooperation that could oblige Israel to implement the agreements it signed. This Arab position should be supported by a strong European position so that the Arabs and Europeans will be able to bring pressure to bear on the Americans and Israelis to implement agreements signed with the PLO.

[Al-Barqawi] The need for a unified Arab position in view of the Israeli political changes has been raised at the Cairo summit. Have Presidents 'Arafat and al-Asad agreed on a mechanism for this?

['Amr] Of course, it was agreed to stress the activation of the Arab summit resolutions, strengthen the Arab position so that all will take a unified stand and so that the Europeans will adopt a unified stand, because without a unified Arab position the Europeans cannot have a unified position. It is difficult to bring pressure to bear on the Americans unless the Arabs and Europeans have stands that can exercise this pressure.

[Al-Barqawi] And a unified Palestinian-Syrian position?

['Amr] Also a Palestinian position.

[Al-Barqawi] Talking of a unified Palestinian-Syrian stand, Was there agreement on .... [a few seconds telephone interruption] we can contact you again later Brother Abu-Tha'ir?

['Amr] Alright.

[Al-Barqawi] But the line is clear now. We have talked about the Palestinian-Syrian stand, we want details, points?

['Amr] In fact Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] explained the circumstances which the [Palestinian] Authority [PA] is facing in dealing with the Israeli authorities, that the PA demands that Israel implement and not review signed agreements. Abu-'Ammar spoke about the difficulties he faced in building the [Gaza] airport, the harbor, the safe passages. He also spoke about the closures and all the difficulties the Palestinian people face in the PA areas. The Syrian delegation listened to these details from Brother Abu-'Ammar.

It was agreed to strengthen the Arab position by direct, intensive, and continuous contacts between important sides, especially Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Palestine, and Syria. The Latakia meeting also dealt with the issue of Jerusalem. The Syrian delegation and President al-Asad agreed with brother Abu-'Ammar that Brother Abu-'Ammar in his own name and on behalf of the Syrian president, should ask the Moroccan King, to convene the Jerusalem committee to discusses developments resulting from the Israeli behavior in the al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem.

[Al-Barqawi] Then the Syrians heard details. Do you believe then that one day the Syrians on the Dar'a border crossing [from Jordan] will allow me to enter Syria on a Palestinian passport?

['Amr] I took upon myself the task to discuss this point. The brothers tried to discuss the issue of increasing the number of seats for Palestinian students in Syrian universities, but I pointed out that any Palestinian who was born in Palestinian should be able to enter Syria, noting that this caused problems with Syria and that Syria cannot prevent those born in Palestine from entering Syria even if they carry Australian passports. These issues were taken into consideration, and I believe they will be discussed with competent departments and the results will be positive.

[Al-Barqawi] The delegation included Education Minister Yasir 'Amr and Higher Education Minister Hanan 'Ashrawi. Was this coincidental?

['Amr] The Education Ministry is concerned about the accreditation of the Palestinian secondary school certificate. The Higher Education Ministry is concerned over the number of Palestinian students who will be admitted to Syrian universities. What is important is to allow the Palestinian citizen to enter Syria regardless of where in Palestine he was born. This was the main point of discussion. I took up this issue with President al-Asad, Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam, and Foreign Minister Faruq al- Shar'. They took a serious view of this matter and measures will be taken after reviewing matters with their security departments and competent authorities.

[Al-Barqawi] You are known as a politician and not a diplomat. Do you believe that suspicions between President 'Arafat and President al-Asad still exist?

['Amr] I believe that this meeting erased many of the suspicions that existed, especially since the current stage requires this, given the strong personal ties that existed between al-Asad and Abu- 'Ammar in the past.

[Al-Barqawi] Do you believe that the Syrians will renounce their attempts to control the Palestinian political decisionmaking?

['Amr] I believe that this issue is over and done with, it is forgotten now. Nobody can control the Palestinian decisionmaking?

[Al-Barqawi] Does this mean that adopting joint interests as a criterion has now begun?

['Amr] I believe that there will be contacts on the experts level. Indeed they asked me to go to Syria. I told them: I want to come driving my own car, with [Palestinian] National Authority written on it and on my diplomatic passport bearing the inscription: Issued by the National Authority. They said you are welcome. I told them: The problem is not mine but that of all the Palestinians. There was complete understanding of our views.

[Al-Barqawi] Understanding, but not a response.

['Amr] No response.

[Al-Barqawi] Last question, brother Abu-Tha'ir. Who do you believe influences the other more, the Palestinian track or the Syrian track?

['Amr] In what connection?

[Al-Barqawi] The current peace process?

['Amr] When Dennis Ross visited them, he told them you must give Netanyahu chance to put his papers in order. However, they are pessimistic. They do not believe that the change in Netanyahu's policy is genuine but an attempt to contact the Palestinians, the Syrians, and other parties concerned to break the deadlock and stop the world campaign against Netanyahu, especially within the European and Arab public opinions.

[Al-Barqawi] How long did last night's joint meeting of the PLO Executive Committee and cabinet last?

['Amr] We met for about seven hours.

[Al-Barqawi] What were the subjects discussed?

['Amr] The most important topics were Abu-'Ammar's visits, his meetings with Levi, with President Mubarak, with French Foreign Minister de Charette, his meeting with Dennis Ross, his visit to Latakia. These topics took up a lot of time. Each of the brothers had some topic to present to the council members.

[Al-Barqawi] Did you reach definite results?

['Amr] The definite results are to prepare the list of negotiating teams. Netanyahu promised to send names of teams which will negotiate with the Palestinian side. We are awaiting this and we will name the members of the Palestinian delegations in all matters to be discussed with Israel, especially the remaining issues in the transitional phase.

[Al-Barqawi] Thank you for this comprehensive interview and for your kindness.

['Amr] Thank you.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Says Closure 'Another Breach' of Agreement

JN2607130596 Gaza Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation Television Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 26 Jul 96

[Announcer-read report over video; italicized passages in English]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] With God's care and protection, President Yasir 'Arafat returned to the homeland today following an official visit to Syria during which he held talks with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad. [passage omitted]

Upon arrival at the Presidential Offices in Gaza, the president described his visit to Syria and his talks with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad as very successful, positive, and constructive. He said:

[Begin recording] [unidentified correspondent] [words indistinct] *the closure this morning of the Palestinian territories after an attack [word indistinct] in Israel. What is your comment on both?*

['Arafat] *I have no full information, until now, about it.*

[Correspondent] *And about the closure, sir*

['Arafat] *This is another breach of what has been agreed upon.* [words indistinct]

[Correspondent] Mr. President, how do you assess your visit to Syria and your meeting with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad?

['Arafat] The visit was successful, positive, and constructive. We discussed the Arab and Palestinian state of affairs in light of the recent developments since the Arab summit, and in light of what takes place on the Arab tracks from the premise of our belief that just, full, and comprehensive peace can only take place on all the Arab tracks; in Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine.

[Correspondent] Mr. President, did you meet with the leaders of the Palestinian opposition?

['Arafat] I was in Latakia. Unfortunately, none of them were there. [end recording]

Palestinian Affairs: 'Siege' on Jericho Lifted; Maintained on Other Governorates

JN2607190896 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1800 GMT 26 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] This afternoon the occupation authorities lifted the siege they imposed on the city of Jericho at dawn today. They also opened crossing points between the governorates of Bethlehem and Hebron. The military siege on the Palestinian governorates of the West Bank is still in effect until further notice. The siege on the West Bank and Gaza Governorates was imposed after the killing of two Israelis and the injury of a third last night, as the occupation authorities said to justify this arbitrary measure.

Palestinian Affairs: Dahlan—Economic Situation in Gaza May Trigger Terrorism

TA2807180896 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 28 Jul 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Muhammad Dahlan, head of the Palestinian Preventive Security Services in the

Gaza Strip, warned today that economic hardships inflicted by the closure may result in the resumption of terrorist activities. Speaking at his first meeting in Gaza with Israeli officers from the District Coordination and Cooperation Office [DCO], Dahlan said he was certain the new government would find ways to preserve the rapport with the Palestinians, as witnessed by the recent moves to alleviate the closure.

Our correspondent Uri Revah reports that the DCO officers' visit to Gaza was made secretly, and the Palestinians banned the media from the site.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Says Waiting for Israel To Implement Accords

NC2807192196 Athens ET-1 Television Network in Greek 1800 GMT 28 Jul 96

["Exclusive" interview with Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat by correspondent Anneta Kavadhia; place and date not given— recorded, in English with Greek subtitles]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Kavvadhia] How optimistic are you about the peace process after Mr. Netanyahu's election?

['Arafat] I am sorry to say that until now, nothing on the ground has changed. We are waiting. We are not asking for the moon, we are asking for what has been agreed upon and what has been signed to be implemented. And until now, nothing is clear from the other side. We are waiting for what has been agreed upon to be implemented—the redeployment of Hebron; we have the isolation of Jerusalem where Christians and Muslims are facing troubles; the redeployment; the [words indistinct] deployment from the rest of the West Bank; the closure, which is a collective punishment against our people.

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Leader Denies Decision To Stop Attacks on Israel

TA2907091296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 29 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Mahmud al-Zahhar, one of the leaders of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] in the Gaza Strip, has denied reports that his movement decided to stop terror attacks against Israel. Al-Zahhar said the reports are untrue, and reiterated his call on the Palestinian Authority to release all 800 Hamas detainees held in its jails.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Urayqat — Netanyahu Settlement Plan To 'Kill' Process

TA2607104896 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 26 Jul 96 p A3

[Report by Sammy Sokol]

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's plan to expand existing settlements and establish new ones along the bypass roads in the West Bank aroused the furor and criticism of senior Palestinian Authority [PA] officials.

In an interview with HA'ARETZ yesterday, Sa'ib 'Urayqat warned about the possibility of a popular uprising and violence by the inhabitants of the West Bank if the plan is implemented. He said: "I hope this government will understand that settlements and peace do not go hand in hand. I hope it will focus on the peace process and take it seriously. Doesn't the Israeli Government understand that the settlements mean that in another 20-30 years, the situation in the region will resemble that of Bosnia?"

'Urayqat went on: "I entreat this government to take courageous steps and freeze all settlement activity if it wants to preserve the peace process. Otherwise, it will be playing with fire. If it pursues settlement activity in any form whatsoever, this will spell the death of the peace process."

'Urayqat said the Netanyahu government must change "its mentality." According to him, the Palestinian population will be unable to pursue the peace process if the new government continues to adopt the policy reported by the Israeli press in recent days.

[Sokol] Should the Israeli Government regard your words as a threat?

['Urayqat] We are not threatening. We want to give peace a chance; however, the settlements will engender violence. Peace and violence do not go together; neither do settlements and peace. The Israeli Government must understand this. We entreat the government to give peace a chance. [end 'Urayqat]

'Urayqat warned that settlements in the West Bank create "a situation for which there will be no political solution." According to him, "we cannot accept a situation where there are two governmental mechanisms, two armies, two education systems, and two health systems in the same area; this is not realistic."

He added that "the settlements are like fuel poured on a raging fire; that is not the way to extinguish the fire. The Palestinian people will rebel; nobody in our society will accept the settlements or the plunder of land. This is not a threat but a prediction. The situation concerning the settlements and the bypass roads is boiling. The people have very hard feelings, and this will lead to an explosion."

'Urayqat noted that the PA had raised the matter with the United States. "The Americans promised us they would raise the issue because they understand that the settlements constitute a time bomb which might blow up in our face any minute."

He asserted that the settlements will lead to problems both in the international and the Arab spheres. "The settlements are the poison that will kill the peace process," he stated.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Attends PLO Executive Committee, Cabinet Meeting

JN2707143696 Gaza Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation Television Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 27 Jul 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat briefed the joint meeting of the PLO Executive Committee and Cabinet last night on the results of his visit to Syria, his talks with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, and Arab and international efforts to advance the peace process in the region.

After the meeting, Nabil Abu-Rudaynah, President 'Arafat's adviser, said that discussion dealt with Israeli attacks against Islamic institutions in Jerusalem, the intensified Israeli siege imposed on all of the Palestinian governorates, as well as a number of Palestinian issues.

[Begin Abu-Rudaynah recording] The president briefed the conferees on the results of expanded political contacts made during the past week. The most prominent of these contacts is the meeting with Egyptian President Muhammad Husni Mubarak and the meeting with Israeli Foreign Minister David Levi, in which the president stressed the need to start implementing the agreements signed between the Palestinian and Israeli sides immediately. President 'Arafat asserted to Levi the Palestinian side's firm adherence to agreements signed between the two sides and its insistence on implementing these agreements, in letter and spirit and as scheduled. These agreements include withdrawal from Hebron, finalizing the issue of crossings, releasing male and female prisoners, and tackling suspended issues in the signed agreements, such as safe passage, the airport, and crossing points with Egypt and Jordan; the siege on Jerusalem; banning Muslims and Christians from performing their prayers; the confiscation of land; and expanding settlements.

On the security and peace issue, President Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] stressed the importance of emphasizing the terms of reference of the Madrid peace conference, which are founded on the basis of land-for-peace and that security and stability are not separate from respect for the signed agreements. Thus, security cannot be provided along with the building of settlements and bypass roads.

President Abu-'Ammar spoke at length about the meeting he held with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad in Latakia. President Abu- 'Ammar said that Syrian-Palestinian relations are now back to normal and that the Syrian-Palestinian endorsement of the Arab summit's resolutions came as a reinforcement of Arab solidarity and the Arab negotiating stand toward achieving a lasting, just, and comprehensive peace on all tracks, including the Palestinian, Syrian, and Lebanese tracks. [end recording]

During the meeting, President Yasir 'Arafat decided to appoint Dr. As'ad 'Abd-al-Rahman, PLO Executive Committee member, as head of the Department of Repatriates in the PLO. The president also delegated Dr. 'Abd-al-Rahman with negotiating the issue of displaced people and put him in charge of the refugees issue in the final status negotiations.

Moreover, it was decided to continue work to appoint municipal councils and service committees at refugee camps to serve citizens until municipal and rural elections are held.

Palestinian Affairs: Factions Urge End To Normalization Until Full Withdrawal

JN2807070196 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 0500 GMT 28 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In a statement issued yesterday, the unified command of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine called for unifying ranks in the battle of defending the Arab identity of Jerusalem and in confronting the policy of confiscating lands and expanding settlements. The statement also called on the Arab and Islamic governments to stop normalizing and establishing relations with Israel until it fully withdraws from all the occupied Arab lands, first among which is Jerusalem.

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Warns of Consequences of al-Aqsa Court Decision

TA2807082496 Jerusalem AL-NAHAR in Arabic 27 Jul 96 pp 1, 7

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Amman, QUDS PRESS — Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] has warned of the consequences of the Israeli court's decision to allow a group of religious Jews to enter al-Aqsa Mosque and perform their religious rites in it. Hamas' official spokesman, Engineer Ibrahim Ghawshah, condemned the Palestinian and Arab silence over the Israeli step. [passage omitted]

In a statement to QUDS PRESS, Ghawshah said that Hamas "views with the utmost seriousness and gravity the Jewish court's decision to allow Zionists to enter al-Aqsa Mosque and al-Haram with the help of the Jewish police." He added that this is a step designed to give legitimacy to the Jews in the mosque and is the beginning of the road toward its total usurpation.

Ghawshah called on the Palestinian people in the Palestinian territories, especially in Jerusalem, together with the Palestinians in the diaspora, to oppose and resist the Israeli decision.

Palestinian Affairs: Al-Za'nun Confirms Charter Amended, Commitments 'Fulfilled'

JN2907111696 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 29 Jul 96 p 23

[Report by 'Awdah 'Awdah]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Salim al-Za'nun, speaker of the Palestine National Council [PNC], said there is no suggestion that a PLO Central Council session be held to amend the Charter or for any other purpose. In an exclusive statement to AL-RA'Y, al-Za'nun said: The Charter was amended last April. The Palestinian side has fulfilled all its obligations in this connection. The Israeli side does not have the right to interfere in a purely Palestinian affair. Al-Za'nun added: The Likud Party circles have fabricated a crisis regarding amending the Palestinian National Charter. This crisis was set off by Beni Begin during the election campaign by claiming that the decision issued by the PNC was a promise to amend the Charter, but not an amendment of the Charter. Also, Likud supporters in the United States obtained a ruling from some lawmen saying that the amendment was not complete.

Al-Za'nun said Israeli Foreign Minister David Levi raised this issue with President 'Arafat. This prompted the Palestinian president to send a letter to the Israeli prime minister confirming the PNC decision on 22 April amending the articles which Israel says deny its existence and contradict the Oslo 1 and 2 agreements.

Al-Za'nun added: Regrettably, the Israeli Government's secretary said two days ago that the letter was not enough to convince the Israeli Government that the Palestinian National Charter has been amended. [passage omitted]

The PNC speaker added: Legal realities indicate that the Charter was amended and that the Palestinian side has fulfilled all its commitments in this respect. The Israeli side is not allowed to interfere in a purely Palestinian affair which concerns the time needed for the Legal Committee to come up with a new formula for the Charter. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs: Establishment of Islamic Renaissance Party Announced

TA2307142096 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 20 Jul 96 p 6

[Report by 'Imad al-Ifranji]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Gaza — The establishment of the Islamic Renaissance Party [Hizb al-Nahdah al-Islami] was announced two days ago in a ceremony at the al-Shawwa Cultural Center in Gaza in the presence of national figures, deputies, and citizens.

The ceremony was opened by recitations from the holy Koran, then 'Abd-al-Halim al-Sutari, the party's secretary general welcomed those present. He said the peace agreements are considered one of the stages of struggle for achieving the goals. He stressed the importance of consolidating national unity and noted that the Palestinians will not have a pillar unless they close ranks and stand together. He added that through unity and promotion of the Palestinian human being we will be able to take large strides toward the independent Palestinian state with holy Jerusalem as its eternal capital.

He affirmed that his party will participate in the National Authority's institutions and in Palestinian decisionmaking. He called on the new Israeli Government to back down from the policy of intransigence, stop settlement activity, lift the siege, and release the prisoners, foremost of all Shaykh Ahmad Yasin. [passage omitted]

Arab-Israeli Talks

Arab-Israeli Talks: Labor's Sne Meets PA Chairman 'Arafat

TA2907102896 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 29 Jul 96 p A3

[Report by Sami Sokol]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In a first meeting with Labor Knesset members after the Israeli elections, Palestinian Authority [PA] Chairman Yasir 'Arafat met with Knesset Member Efrayim Sne in Gaza yesterday. The two discussed ways to prevent a deterioration in the relations between Israel and the PA.

Sne told 'Arafat that he believes three conditions must be met to promote the relations: A joint struggle against terrorism; an economic boost to the territories that would raise the standard of living of Palestinians; and avoiding the expansion of settlements. He asserted that it is enough for one of the conditions not to be met "to destroy everything achieved in the peace process so far."

Sne received the impression that 'Arafat expects worrisome negative political developments. At the end of the meeting, the parties decided to continue the dialogue and meetings between them. "The main question is how to prevent an escalation following the results of the Israeli elections and to bolster the Oslo achievements," Sne noted. [passage omitted]

'Arafat said that the meeting was good and encouraging, and praised the contacts between the PA and the Israeli opposition. [passage omitted]

Algeria

Algeria: GIA Statement Announces Zitouni's Ouster

LD2607183696 Algiers EL WATAN in French 16 Jul 96 p 3

[Unattributed article: "GIA - Djamel Zitouni Ousted From Its Leadership"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Djemal Zitouni, alias Abou Abderrahmane Amine, has been ousted from the leadership of the Armed Islamic Group [GIA], the most radical terrorist group. The announcement came in a statement made public by the GIA's Consultative Council [Madjlis Echoura] on Sunday [14 July 1996].

The statement, whose authenticity has yet to be established, was signed by someone called Hassan Abou Walid, commander of Region Six.

In this statement, the Consultative Council announced that it was henceforth "innocent" of anything that Djamel Zitouni might do and that the latter would be "tried," without giving any further details.

The statement also announced that Hassan Abou Walid had been appointed as the "GIA's acting Emir" until the next meeting of "regional commanders" of the organizations.

Also, it was also announced that Abou Raihana, whose real name according to some sources is Farid Achi, had been ousted from the leadership of the movement's Legislative Committee and that Antar, whose family name is Zouabri, had been ousted from its National Consultative Council. Zouabri, who comes from the region of Boufarik [30 miles south of Algiers], where the armed Islamic groups are very active, is one of the GIA's bloodiest leaders.

The statement also said that the Consultative Council is innocent of anything that might be carried out by "dissident groups." In this context, it named the group of Kertali, the emir of Larbaa, who announced some months ago his defiance of Djamel Zitouni, and the Islamic Front of Armed Djihad [FIDA]. The latter, whose leadership, according to some sources, includes mainly university graduates, specializes in the assassination of intellectuals and politicians. However, last May this group lost its leader, Mohamed Brahimi, and 15 of his companions during the security forces' spectacular operation in the area of Said Hamdine of Algiers.

The Consultative Council insisted, however, that it only took this decision after having examined the facts of the last few months during which the movement had endured "a phase of physical liquidation which has shaken a number of brothers." "This phase was an occasion to distinguish hypocrites from honest people and pinpoint infiltrators into the ranks of the Jamaa," continued the statement, which also accused Djamel Zitouni of being a wicked man manipulated by the security services.

Algeria: GIA Announces Assassination of Zitouni in Ambush 16 Jul

LD2707180996 Paris Radio France International in French 1730 GMT 27 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Before we finish, a last-minute item concerning Algeria: The GIA, the Armed Islamic Group, has announced the assassination of Djamel Zitouni, leader of the Armed Islamic Group, also known by the name of Abou Abderrahmane Amine. He was killed in an ambush set by enemies of Islam on 16 July, a communique from this Islamist movement, quoted by AFP, has announced.

Egypt

Egypt: Musa on U.S. Role, Peace Prospects

NC2607193396 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1800 GMT 26 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Washington, 26 Jul (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa underlined the pivotal role that the United States should play as a neutral broker in the Middle East peace process.

In a speech he delivered at the International and Strategic Studies Center in Washington today, Musa said that the achievements made so far in the peace process would have been difficult to accomplish without the United States and therefore the region needs Washington's continued role as an honest broker.

He added that relations between Egypt and the United States are positive and good and based on constant consultations and increasing cooperation in the economic field, but, like other normal relations, they at the same time allow differences in views on some issues. However, he added, Washington understands Egypt's obligations as an Arab and Middle Eastern country.

He noted that there is a need for more serious and honest brokerage in the Middle East, referring in this respect to the interest shown by Europe, Russia, and China to play a role in the regional peace process, especially Europe, which has vast interests in the region. But he stressed that the European, Asian, and regional roles will not be an alternative to the U.S. one but an auxiliary factor in the efforts to reach a peaceful, fair, and comprehensive solution and achieve stability in the region, noting that there is some instability in the Gulf and the southern area of the Red Sea and in north Africa.

Musa called on Washington to continue to seriously undertake its pivotal during the coming few months despite the elections at the end of year, saying that a superpower such as the United States cannot remain paralyzed for six months because of the elections.

Musa underlined the principles of Egypt's position on the peace process, which are the full commitment to the principle of land for peace; a full Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank, Gaza, the Golan, and south Lebanon; recognition of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination; and Israel's right to exist within secure and recognized borders.

The foreign minister added: All the parties involved in the peace process should oppose the attempts to deviate from the framework for the peaceful settlement either through terrorist actions or through deviation from the general rules laid down at the Madrid peace conference. He added: It is not wise now to have another look at the peace process rules and premises, especially the principle of land for peace and Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, because there is no alternative to continuing the negotiations on the basis of the Madrid resolutions in order to achieve a peaceful settlement.

Musa explained that terrorism is an international phenomenon and confronting it requires a united stand. He said: We are ready to do all we can, but we are not willing to let this be the top priority. He added: There is a need to restore confidence in the peace process, which is going through a critical and fragile phase now and which needs the backing of the Arabs, Israel, the United States, and the other concerned countries.

Musa called on Israel to abide by the Oslo agreements, complete withdrawal from Hebron, which was scheduled to be carried out before 12 June, and put an end to the Israeli closure of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

He said that the agreements concluded so far on the Palestinian track are temporary and not enough to be the basis for the final status. Therefore, the final status negotiations should continue and include Jerusalem, the refugees, settlements, water, and other issues.

He added that it was Israel which suspended the peace negotiations with Syria before the Israeli elections in May and the party that suspended them ought to resume them, especially as Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu stressed that he is ready to act within the Madrid framework. He said: Any potential agreement with Syria cannot be concluded except on the basis of the UN resolutions and the principle of land for peace as President Mubarak explained to Netanyahu in Cairo. Musa stressed that Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad is interested in reaching a peaceful settlement quickly and "what should be done now is to resume the negotiations."

Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa rejected the idea of an Israeli peace or an Arab peace, affirming that there is a need for a just settlement. He said: "We in the Arab world are determined to open a new chapter of peace with Israel. But there must be a just solution. There is no Israeli peace or Arab peace but peace that is acceptable and that satisfies the security of all parties." He said that the "Lebanon First" plan, which press sources claim U.S. Peace Coordinator Dennis Ross is carrying during his current tour of the region, "has not been officially submitted, and therefore it does not merit comment at present." According to these sources, the plan calls for Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon and for Hizballah fighters' to keep a distance of 40 km north of the Lebanese-Israeli border.

Musa said that Egypt has received good promises from Nentanyahu but "it is now awaiting practical measures." He added that there is peace between Egypt and Israel in the form of commercial and tourism exchanges of varying degrees. This peace will be strengthened and become "normal" when Israel achieves full peace with Syria, Lebanon, and the Palestinians. Egypt does not object to the Arabs normalizing their relations with Israel within the framework of the Madrid Conference resolutions.

Musa said the monitoring of armaments in the Middle East must be just and must apply to all parties without exception or else it will fail in its arms control mission. "Whereas it is true that there is an Israeli nuclear program, we cannot blame any other party for its desire to possess a similar weapon. This leads to an arms race in the region." He explained that the region is feeling the current world changes and is not isolated from them. The region needs peace. He added that "we have the means to achieve peace. We are now entering the most important phase. We are at a crossroads. The time factor is important and if we lose it in defining priorities, big problems will arise." He said that the choice before the Middle East countries is either to join the list of stable and economically prosperous countries or slip into a precipice of disturbances and conflicts.

Egypt: Musa Meets Pelletreau in Washington, Previews Mubarak Visit

NC2707191496 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1735 GMT 27 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Washington, 27 Jul (MENA)—Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa met with Robert

Pelletreau, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, shortly before noon, Washington time, today. The meeting, which was attended by Egyptian Ambassador to Washington Ahmad Mahir and U.S. Ambassador to Egypt Edward Walker, was part of the preparations for the talks President Husni Mubarak will hold with U.S. President Bill Clinton and senior U.S. officials this week.

After the meeting 'Amr Musa stressed the importance of cooperation between the United States and Egypt during this delicate phase of the Middle East peace process. He added that the U.S. Administration realizes the importance of the Egyptian role in this process and is convinced that Egypt, in the final analysis, works for the benefit of the peace process and is itself committed to peace, while at the same time being committed to certain firm Arab positions.

Musa explained that President Mubarak will not be speaking for Egypt alone during his discussions in Washington but, in his capacity as chairman of the Arab summit, will be speaking for all Arabs.

The foreign minister said that President Mubarak's visit, which will begin tomorrow, Sunday, and last until next Wednesday, will help bring matters under control, contain "the unfavorable circumstances" through which the Middle East peace process is passing, and put it back on track.

'Amr Musa pointed out that it was Israel that halted the negotiations with some Arab parties because of its recent elections, which brought the current Likud government to power. Hence, he said, it is Israel that must now act to resume the negotiations.

He added that the negotiations must be resumed at the earliest opportunity because it is not possible to wait for several months until after the U.S. Presidential election in November, warning that such a delay would cause the peace process to retreat or stagnate, thus threatening the entire peace operation. Musa said that he conveyed this view to the U.S. assistant secretary of state during his meeting with him today.

'Amr Musa confirmed that there are some differences in views between Egypt and the United States over several issues but "they do not affect the good and special relations" between the two countries.

Egypt: Musa Views Effect of Elections on U.S. Middle East Policy

NC2807190096 Cairo ESC Television in Arabic 1700 GMT 28 Jul 96

[Interview with Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa by an unidentified Egyptian television correspondent in Washington; date not given—live or recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Correspondent] This is the U.S. election year. Observers say that U.S. domestic and foreign policy is restrained during these elections. We met Egyptian Foreign 'Amr Musa in Washington.

Mr. Minister, does this apply to the Middle East peace process?

[Musa] The conventional wisdom says that a few months—4-to-6 months—before the presidential elections the U.S. Administration becomes unable to take initiatives and to move actively on sensitive issues such as the Middle East peace process. But I believe that as the only superpower now, the United States cannot paralyze itself and stop working on world issues for six months, whether in the Middle East, Bosnia, or problems in Latin America or Asia.

Therefore, I believe that the U.S. policy will continue, perhaps with less speed. The United States will and must continue working as an impartial intermediary to advance the peace process, even now.

Egypt: Al-Baz Notes Need for No Change in U.S. Stance on Jerusalem

NC2807055296 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 0400 GMT 28 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. Usamah al-Baz, first Foreign Ministry under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, has told our radio team in Washington that the peace process will top the list of topics that President Mubarak will discuss with President Clinton. He added that the two presidents will also discuss the Middle East and issues of mutual interest.

Asked about the U.S. stance on Jerusalem and the settlements, Dr. al-Baz said it is clear that there is no change in the U.S. position and there must be no change in this position. He noted that the United States is required to continue its efforts to keep the peace process in motion regardless of any preoccupation with the election.

Egppt: Minister Comments on Mubarak's U.S. Visit, Ties

NC2807154396 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1455 GMT 28 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 28 Jul (MENA)—Egyptian Minister of Information Safwat al-Sharif has reiterated the importance of President Husni Mubarak's current visit to the United States. He said the visit represents an opportunity to exchange views with U.S. Administration officials to advance the peace process and emphasize the principles and basic points of reference on which this process is based.

In statements to Cairo Radio today, the information minister said this visit is the object of Arab and world interest in view of Egypt's international influence and the important role played by President Mubarak in advancing the peace process.

Al-Sharif added that, in his capacity as chairman of the Arab summit who at the same time represents the Arab public's will, President Mubarak is carrying the Arab leaders' views.

The information minister noted that President Mubarak's visit to Washington comes during one of the most critical phases of the peace process. This, he added, shows Egypt's concern to work to revive this process and contribute to resuming the peace talks on all tracks.

In his statements to Cairo Radio, al-Sharif said President Husni Mubarak's meetings with the decision-making circles in the United States during his visit will be extremely important in terms of clarifying Arab views and the resolutions passed by the Cairo Arab summit on the strategy of peace.

The Egyptian information minister said there is a great deal of optimism and little disagreement between Egypt's and the U.S. views on peace issues. He noted that the United States has explicitly announced its support for the principle of land for peace and its respect for the Security Council and UN documents and resolutions concerning the Middle East. Besides, the United States is a basic partner in all phases of peace and a key sponsor of the peace process, he added.

Commenting on the unique Egyptian-U.S. ties, the information minister told Cairo Radio that a meeting will be held between Egyptian and U.S. businessmen during President Mubarak's visit. The aim of the meeting, he added, is to encourage the flow of U.S. investments into Egypt and boost economic, technological, and technical cooperation between the two countries.

Egypt: Radio Suggests Mubarak To Raise Nuclear File in U.S. Talks

NC2707064396 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 0420 GMT 27 Jul 96

[Report by 'Abbas Mutawalli from Washington]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] President Mubarak's trip to the United States follows Dennis Ross' exploratory tour to build on what was achieved during President Mubarak's talks with Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu. President Mubarak warned Netanyahu of dire consequences if Israel fails to take tangible steps toward a settlement on the occupied territories that satisfies both the Syrians and Palestinians. [passage omitted]

This topic will undoubtedly be discussed during President Mubarak's talks with President Clinton on Tuesday [30 July]. The United States shares the Arab view that the basis must be the land-for-peace principle, a principle that the new Israeli prime minister tried to evade during his recent visit to Washington. But he indirectly backtracked when he told President Mubarak that he is committed to the authority of the 1991 Madrid conference, which required both the Arab and Israeli sides to accept the land-for-peace formula.

In addition to bilateral ties and his expected meetings with senior U.S. Government and Congress officials, President Mubarak, in his discussions, is expected to explain to President Clinton Egypt's stance regarding weapons of mass destruction, particularly after the clamor raised by Israel over Egypt's alleged purchase of Scud missiles from North Korea.

Egyptian Ambassador to Washington Ahmad Mahir al-Sayyid has stated that if Israel is serious in its accusations President Mubarak may call for opening the nuclear file of all the Middle East countries, including Israel, which possesses intercontinental missiles, as President Mubarak has stated, the range of which exceeds 2,000 km, while the Scud missiles do not go further than 350 km. There is also a tendency to revive President Mubarak's proposal to turn the Middle East into a zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

Egypt: Mubarak Reportedly To Face 'Embarrassing' U.S. Questions

JN2907073396 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 0500 GMT 29 Jul 96

[Report by Hisham Milhim in Washington]

[FBIS Translated Text] During his scheduled meetings with U.S. congressmen on 31 July, the Egyptian president is expected to be asked some embarrassing questions that cast doubt on Egypt's intentions or hint at the possibility of curtailing U.S. aid to Cairo. Some voices were recently heard in the Congress criticizing Egypt for its close ties with Libya and its role in organizing the recent Arab summit in Cairo. This criticism, made by some supporters of Israel, went as far as doubting Egypt's peace intentions. Egyptian officials, including Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa, say these positions do not express the opinion of the whole Congress, but only those expressing them. Musa said the following to Radio Monte Carlo.

[Begin Musa recording] I do not view this as tension in relations. On the contrary, the current consultations and discussions deal with all issues, including those on which there is agreement or disagreement. It is natural to have areas of agreement and disagreement as long as relations are based on mutual respect. [end recording]

Regarding the possibility of the United States curtailing economic aid to Egypt, Minister Musa said Cairo realizes that this aid will not stay for ever. Therefore, he said, Egypt is building its economy pending the time when such aid will no longer be needed, adding that this is not expected in the near future.

Egypt: Papers View Importance of Mubarak's Washington Visit

NC2707075496 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0515 GMT 26 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 26 Jul (MENA)—AL-AKHBAR reports today that the summit between President Mubarak and U.S. President Bill Clinton in Washington on Tuesday [30 July] will focus on the Middle East peace process and on boosting bilateral economic cooperation by increasing Egyptian exports, allowing Egyptian companies to join in U.S. bids, and attracting U.S. investments in new sectors other than oil, where 80 percent of total U.S. investments are concentrated.

The paper adds that the talks between Presidents Mubarak and Clinton will also focus on promoting the status of the Egyptian-U.S. partnership by setting up a free trade and services zone and an independent body from among leaders of the two countries' private sectors under the name of the council of presidents, tasked with advising and passing on recommendations to the two countries' governments. It adds that the two presidents' talks will also cover the economic summit due to be held in Cairo in November in which the United States and European Union, Middle East, North African, and friendly countries will participate. The Egyptian side will also seek to determine the U.S. Administration's position on measures to establish a Middle East bank, a decision that was suspended indefinitely, especially as it was the United States that proposed setting up this bank at the Casablanca and Amman summit. But Congress refused to allocate the funds to cover the U.S. share of the capital—around $260 million or 21 percent.

The paper goes on to say: The U.S. Administration has approved the U.S. aid program for Egypt for 1997, which totals $815 million in economic aid and $1.3 billion for military cooperation. It adds that a $400-million grant to boost economic reforms will be signed in mid-August. The Administration's report praised the achievements made, most notably the stabilization of population growth at 2.2 percent, the 4.4-percent increase in the rate of development, and the drop in the budget deficit from 4.7 percent in 1992-93 to 1.5 percent.

Dr. Ahmad Juwayli, trade and supply minister and a member of the delegation that will accompany President Mubarak on his visit to Washington, said the target is to increase Egyptian exports to the United States this year from $606 million to $750 million and to $2 billion in the next few years. He added that this requires the repeal of export quotas or an increase in their percentage, particularly as Egypt's imports reached $3 billion last year. He noted that U.S. investment in Egypt has reached $1.4 billion, 80 per cent of which is in the oil sector. He said that Egypt is looking toward attracting U.S. investments in other sectors in light of measures recently taken by the Cabinet.

AL-AHRAM Chief Editor Ibrahim Nafi' devoted his weekly column to the development of Egyptian-U.S. relations. He focuses on the joint interests that brought the two countries together for over two decades and strengthened the ties between them following a period of confrontation that lasted throughout the fifties and sixties and peaked in the October 1973 war.

Under the headline "Egypt and the United States: Areas of Agreement and Margins of Disagreement," Nafi' writes: There is no doubt that achieving peace in the Middle East and resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict were the primary interests that created and molded the relationship following the three weeks of battles of the October war. The United States unambiguously explained that Israel's security theory was not permanent and that the price the United States would have to pay would be so massive in terms of financial and military aid to Israel that intervention to effect a settlement would seem easier. There were also the losses that accrued from the Arabs' efficient and decisive use of the oil weapon, which affected society in Europe, the United States, and Japan, politically and socially. He adds: It was not only a U.S. interest, but an

Egyptian one. Thus the two interests converged on the need to seek a solution for the Arab-Israeli conflict in its every aspect. Egypt and the United States believed that letting the situation continue as it was would be a complete loss and that there were opportunities to overcome it by reaching a settlement based on Egyptian and U.S. efforts.

Ibrahim Nafi goes on to say: While the peace process constitutes a joint Egyptian-U.S. interest, the security of the Gulf constitutes the second joint interest. Egypt's interest stems from Arab ties, the joint defense obligations under the Arab League, Egypt's and the Gulf states' increasing dependence on each other as a result of the flow of Egyptian workers to these countries and the Gulf states' lion's share of Egyptian tourism as manifested by the number of Gulf tourists and the volume of their spending in Egypt, the link between the Suez Canal and the safety of its economy, the Sumed oil line that carries Arab oil from Suez to Alexandria and from there to global markets, and Arab investments in Egypt that grew as Egypt's economic openness continued.

He adds: When President Mubarak arrives in Washington early next week his visit will be one of the important landmarks of this 23- year relationship between Egypt and the United States.

Regarding the U.S. position on the peace process under Binyamin Netanyahu's leadership of Israel, Samir Rajab writes in his daily column in AL-JUMHURIYAH: It is clear that the United States wants to assert that charters must inescapably be honored and the land returned to its owners so that things can be sorted out and stability achieved. He adds: The arrival of Dennis Ross, who is called a peace coordinator, in Syria, specifically in al-Qardahah, the birthplace of Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, before travelling to Israel gives the impression that the United States does not want to appear to be supporting one side at the expense of the other while trying at the same time to lessen the effects of the statements made by Netanyahu during his recent visit to Washington, statements that provoked Arabs and non-Arabs.

Egypt: Papers View Egypt-U.S. Ties

NC2707081296 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0615 GMT 27 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 27 Jul (MENA)—Senior writers in the Cairo press discuss the progress of Egyptian-U.S. ties and their future and present their expectations of the forthcoming summit between Presidents Husni Mubarak and Bill Clinton in Washington on Tuesday [30 July].

AL-AHRAM today publishes the second part of Chief Editor Ibrahim Nafi's article entitled "Egypt and the United States: Areas of Agreement and Margins of Disagreement." Nafi' begins by saying that nothing expresses Egypt's view of its relationship with the United States more accurately than President Mubarak's repeated reference to this relationship as one of friendship, not subservience. Nafi' notes that in any ties of friendship between countries there are areas of agreement and disagreement, which is only natural in international relations that are based on equality and mutual respect and are free from dictation of terms and policies. No relationship between any two countries follows one pattern of complete and constant harmony, he adds. But any two parties who care about their friendship and who wish to promote their mutual interest may establish close relations that could withstand any difference in views over the role played by each party or where its interests lie.

The writer points out that it is natural for differences to occur between a world superpower and a country that is pivotal and influential in its region. It is also normal for these differences to occur most during times of major transformation. Undoubtedly the world has been going through such a stage since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. Similarly, he adds, the Middle East is experiencing change. This is demonstrated by the launching of the peace process between the Arabs and Israel, under which the region's map will be recharted along lines that both Egypt and the United States may view differently, the first being a major regional state and the second as a superpower that plays a vital role and has strategic interests in this region. Nafi' adds that while assuming this role the United States must take into account that opinions concerning the future of this region may vary and that this multiplicity of views could lead to disagreements with this or that state. But there is a big difference between a disagreement with a country with which it is linked by common interests and that with a country with conflicting interests.

Nafi' adds: The United States is well aware of this difference, although some political circles there and some interest groups that influence decisionmakers sometimes act in a different way without considering this difference. Hence the importance of the dialogue conducted on various levels, particularly the summit level, to keep differences of opinion over policies in perspective to preserve mutual interests, broaden them, and reduce or at least stabilize areas of disagreement.

Concluding, the writer notes that Egypt's reservations over the U.S. role in the peace process notwithstanding, particularly its bias toward Israel's stance, Egypt's firm view remains that this role is indispensable. From this premise, Egypt always tries to persuade the U.S. Administration of the need to observe objectivity in its role, which needs to rest on international legality, and to act as a full partner, as pledged by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher in his first Middle East tour in 1993, thus becoming the fair mediator that former U.S. Secretary of State James Baker talked about during preparations for the Madrid conference in 1991.

Under the title "President Mubarak and the United States," **AKHBAR AL-YAWM** Chief Editor Ibrahim Sa'dah notes that making peace in the Middle East is one of the most important things in common between the Egyptian and U.S. Presidents. President Mubarak believes that Egypt, which has initiated peace, is primarily responsible for preserving it on the Palestinian, Jordanian, Syrian, and Lebanese tracks. This responsibility assumed by the Egyptian leadership is not only due to its negotiating experience with Israel until a peace agreement was signed and Egypt's land was restored, but, more importantly, is the result of its indisputable and inalienable pan- Arab commitment to Arab rights, causes, and concerns.

Sa'dah adds that any observer of Egypt's pan-Arab policy that is charted and followed by President Mubarak will realize that it primarily rests on nonintervention in any internal affairs of the Arab states. Under Mubarak Egypt does not impose itself on any Arab state but willingly gives advice if requested and sides with any country in its bid to regain a lost right. This is precisely what Egypt is doing in the peace process on the various Arab tracks, something the U.S. Administration could not understand. The U.S. Administration thought President Mubarak imposed his opinion on the Arab states and advised them to reject the compromises proposed by Israel to expedite peace on all the Arab tracks.

Ibrahim Sa'dah goes on to say: The U.S. Administration cannot see how the Egyptian president could be more hardline than the Palestinian president in a search to find a solution to some problem that the two sides could not solve at the negotiating table. Nor can it see how the Egyptian president could fail to convince his Syrian counterpart and friend President Hafiz al-Asad to make concessions that Israel and the United States believe to be minor ones but that the Syrians believe to be very important and serious.

The writer says he believes that the U.S. lack of understanding of some of President Mubarak's positions on the peace process on the various Arab tracks has consequently led to a mistrust of some of these stands such that concerned Arab officials have received much advice from U.S. and Israeli officials saying: "Stay away from Egypt and ask it not to interfere in your affairs so that we can guarantee that you will attain the desired peace very quickly." No matter how much the Syrians and Palestinians assert that Egypt is not interfering in their affairs or imposing its custodianship on their negotiations with the Israelis, their claims fall on deaf ears and no one is convinced.

The **AKHBAR AL-YAWM** editor goes on to write: While President Clinton now understands President Mubarak's desire and obligation to support the demand for Arab rights, there are still senior and minor officials from his administration who insist on their dissatisfaction with these stances and on adhering to the view that continuing Egyptian intervention to back the Palestinian, Syrian, Lebanese, or Jordanian negotiator has impeded the process, because the Egyptian is always more royal than the king. He adds: The view of these State Department officials when they assess the support Egypt gives to the Arab brothers is not important. What is important is that the U.S. President has become convinced that President Mubarak has no concern, but to speed up the peace process to cut the path from under the enemies of peace and supporters of terrorism and thus make the Middle East a secure and stable region.

Sa'dah notes that the U.S. President has often praised President Mubarak, who has proved that he is not seeking peace and prosperity for his people or the Arab peoples only, but wants these things for all the peoples and countries. He says: When the terrorist and criminal acts in the region followed each other successively, President Mubarak hastened to call for the Sharm al-Shaykh summit, which stressed the bases of peace while confronting terrorism. When President Mubarak called for this summit, he did not hesitate, even when it was said that Israel would benefit from these counterterrorism measures, since there is no objection to letting the Israelis enjoy security and peace as long as the Arabs enjoy this security with and before them. He adds: If a terrorist group targets Christians today, then it will certainly target Muslims tomorrow and lie in wait for Jews the day after.

A study headlined "New Bases for Equal Relations for the Two Sides' Benefit" published today in **AL-JUMHURIYAH** notes it does not expect the issue of U.S. aid to Egypt to be discussed during President Mubarak's Washington visit. It says: The principal issue will be the peace process. Dialogue on aid is discussed by senior economic officials from both countries through the Egyptian-U.S. partnership. Additionally, recent statements from the U.S. Administration, stressing its commitment to help Egypt, show that Washington regards this economic aid as very important, not only for Egypt, but also for the United States and the entire Middle East.

It adds: Egypt has political, economic, and security status in the region. It does not need anyone who thinks he can set out or impose conditions. But it really needs joint cooperation proceeding in two directions, not just one.

Egypt: Papers Highlight Importance of Mubarak Visit

NC2907063496 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2045 GMT 28 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 28 Jul (MENA)—AL-AHRAM's and AL- JUMHURIYAH's editorials continue to highlight the importance of President Husni Mubarak's visit to the United States for boosting the Middle East peace process.

In its editorial for tomorrow AL-AHRAM writes that the world is waiting to see how the visit will go and awaiting the important results it is expected to yield at this sensitive time for the Middle East, which is on a knife-edge between peace and continuing aggression. It stresses that President Mubarak will be firm and decisive in defending legitimate Arab rights and says he will call on the United States as the main peace process sponsor to do its best to establish peace in the Middle East on the bases and principles agreed on.

AL-AHRAM adds: President Mubarak's U.S. visit is important from various aspects. It comes after a new hardline government took power in Israel, after new Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu visited the United States, and after Egypt's success in convening the first Arab summit in six years. It says that during the visit Egypt will explain Arab demands for achieving a comprehensive and just peace in the Middle East, particularly as one of the two pivotal issues the recent Arab summit focused on was how to complete the peace process on the basis of all the UN resolutions and the Madrid conference. It notes that the Arab demands center on the basic principles of land in return for peace, the noninfringement of the holy Arab places — both Muslim and Christian — in Jerusalem, and the need to complete the peace process to achieve a comprehensive and just peace in the region on the basis of all the relevant UN resolutions.

The paper goes on to say that the most important aspect of the visit is that it comes a short time before the U.S. presidential elections the outcome of which is known to be affected by the influence of the Jewish lobby in the United States. It adds: As the main peace process sponsor, the United States is called upon to respond to the Arab nation's legitimate demands without heeding the Jewish lobby's influence. It is also called upon to prompt the Israeli Government to continue implementing the Palestinian-Israeli agreements.

The paper then says: The U.S. Administration is also called upon to pressure the Israeli Government to take practical and procedural steps to complete the peace process on the remaining tracks, especially the Syrian one, for the sake of achieving more stability in the Middle East and for the sake of a comprehensive and just settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, a settlement that cannot be achieved without restoring Arab territories and rights.

AL-AHRAM notes that President Mubarak's itinerary is one worthy of a president who has acumen and is a good manager of affairs. It is an itinerary worthy of the president of Egypt, which is playing a crucial role in the region and in protecting its security and stability.

AL-JUMHURIYAH writes: The link between progress in the peace process and the creation of the right atmosphere for economic breakthrough and investments has been proven. This truth will help speed up the resumption of the peace process on the basis of international legitimacy and the principle of land in return for peace, because this will not only serve the interests of all the parties, but will also serve international stability and security.

The paper notes that U.S. and Egyptian officials have agreed to give top priority to the peace process during the summit talks between Presidents Mubarak and Clinton on Tuesday [30 July].

Egypt: Musa Says Not Aware of Israel's 'Lebanon First' Offer

NC2907071296 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0430 GMT 29 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has told the newspaper AL-NAHAR that he has no knowledge of an Israeli offer under the name of Lebanon First. But Musa noted that should such an offer exist, it is up to Lebanon first to give an opinion on it.

Speaking on the eve of President Mubarak's talks in Washington, Musa added that President Mubarak will focus on the extreme importance of continuing the peace process in a serious manner.

Another Egyptian official has stated that Mubarak is carrying a political message from the Arab leaders to President Bill Clinton. The message stresses the need to respect the land-for-peace principle, self-determination for the Palestinian people, and the implementation of the agreement concluded between the Arab and Israeli sides.

Egypt: Mubarak Speech on Prophet's Birthday

NC2807062396 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1910 GMT 27 Jul 96

[Speech by Egyptian President Husni Mubarak at a ceremony marking Prophet Muhammad's birthday held at the International Conference Center in Madinat al-Nasr, Cairo—live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Passage omitted] Islam planted new ideals that preach tolerance, mercy, cohesion, and justice in the heart of believers. These ideals uphold the value of work and abhor discrimination, oppression, fanaticism, and extremism. They warn against harming other people and adopting hatred and malice. Islamic society was established on strong foundations. Values are the sure guarantee of the safety of the structure and good behavior. They form the criterion that protects the fabric of society. They are the element that establishes a balance between the interest of the individual and the interest of society and that establishes the human being's vision of his role on this earth as a maker of peace, preacher of good, and pioneer of glory and progress. The world won a great Islamic civilization that preserved for mankind the continuity of civilizations and interacted with other cultures without fear or hesitation, drawing culture from these and adding to them. This Islamic civilization enriched the human heritage and strengthened its march across the centuries.

This is, in short, what we take from the lesson of the past as we celebrate this glorious anniversary.

But today our nation is suffering negative aspects that are sapping its strength, obstructing its march, and threatening its existence at a time when other nations are engaged in a battle for comprehensive development and scientific and technological renaissance and are achieving great feats in all walks of life amid fierce competition in which survival is for the fittest and strongest, who can grasp the march of progress and who possess the components of the revolution of science and information. In this world there is no place for the weak or for small entities. Although our orthodox religion affirms the principle of right and justice and stresses nonaggression against the right of others to their land and property and to their freedom, dignity, and security, we find that some of those who belong to the Islamic nation have been involved in attacking the rights of their Muslim brothers and in threatening their security and safety without considering the rights, fraternity, or sanctity of good-neighborliness that Islam strongly emphasizes. Some of those who belong to Islam have in recent years resorted to interfering in the affairs of some fraternal Arab and Islamic countries through conspiracy, sabotage, and support for terrorism in order to shatter security and stability with the aim of establishing areas of influence beyond their borders and compelling fraternal Islamic nations to submit to their will and accept their hegemony through pressure, blackmail, threats, and promises.

These misled Muslims have forgotten that our orthodox religion honors the sanctity of other people's property and does not allow their blood to be shed. Our religion allows no one—for any reason—to frighten others and cause bloodshed.

[passage omitted] The blessed Koran and sayings of the prophet emphasize that these acts of aggression, which result in murdering and terrifying innocent people, are against the spirit, teachings, and values of Islam. They even tarnish its image in the minds of other peoples.

The essence and sublime teachings of Islam call for respecting the human soul, preserving solidarity among members of the nation, unifying their ranks, and abstaining from causing any harm. This constitutes one of the most important principles in Islam, the religion of justice and mercy, and shows the sound application of the principle of Islamic brotherhood, which necessitates sympathy, cohesion, and solidarity among believers of the same religion.

Second in priority after the solidarity principle is the principle of commitment to peace. By this I mean a just, comprehensive, and lasting peace. In Islam peace is the foundation of our relations among ourselves and our relations with others. Islam does not permit Muslim infighting or a Muslim to raise a weapon against his brother. Furthermore, using arms to fight others is allowed by Islam only for the purpose of self-defense against actual aggression or when there is sufficient evidence that plans have been made to carry out such aggression. Peace then is the rule and war is the exception in the Islamic view. God Almighty put it perfectly when he said: Fight in the cause of God those who fight you, but do not transgress limits. [Koranic verse]

If our noble religion has urged us to maintain solidarity to grow stronger and enable our voice to be heard and our banner raised, it also called upon us to uphold peace so that we might live in security and stability. In an atmosphere of peace and security we could work, build, and catch up with the march of progress and civilization. For this purpose we adopt the policy of solidarity and peace and believe in the need to follow it as a firm strategy that suits the values of our noble religion, which we are eager to follow and observe. For the sake of solidarity we work tirelessly and incessantly and do our utmost to close ranks. We thank God Almighty for the Arab leaders' success in unifying ranks and getting together at the Arab summit in Cairo a few weeks ago. This summit will always remain a bright landmark and chapter in Arab history.

For the sake of peace we continue to endeavor to achieve a just, comprehensive, and lasting peace to prove to the whole world that we are not advocates of war, but advocates of peace who have rights. Our peace is the peace of the able and proud, not the peace of the weak and helpless. In demanding Arab rights we rely on dialogue and negotiations based on civilized methods and under which the parties involved rely on international legitimacy and rules of law and justice as their terms of reference.

To those who are threatening the peace process or casting doubt on our approach to it, we say that we insist on the peace we chose and started because our religion urges us to do so. Our interest and that of the rest of the world requires this. No one can cast doubt on our intentions or force us to change our position. We seek a just, permanent, and comprehensive peace. This peace is buttressed by agreements already concluded and supported by the international community. It is the course that gives every party its rights, establishes the required balance between the rights and obligations of the parties, and that provides the necessary protection for their legitimate interests. [passage omitted]

Peace is our path to stability and security. Peace is our path to reconstruction, development, production, and prosperity. Our experiment is the best example. With peace we have focused our efforts on repairing war damage. We have built new towns, more factories, and expanded agricultural areas. We have thus doubled production, provided services, and started a new phase, the good effects of which will hopefully cover every walk of life in Egypt.

There is great hope that we will achieve this comprehensive renaissance and elevate beloved Egypt to a higher level commensurate with its prominent position in history and with its people's special capabilities.

These are my thoughts on the prophet's birthday. I hope they will be a fraternal message to my brother Muslims worldwide. I ask God that this message will receive a positive response commensurate with its genuine approach. I hope it will be well received so that our nation's future will be better than its present—on a par with its great past. God grant us success and support. May God's peace and mercy be with you.

Libya

Libya: Al-Qadhdhafi—U.S. Should Have Canceled Games After TWA Incident

NC2707060896 Paris AFP in English
0024 GMT 27 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tripoli, July 26 (AFP)—The United States should have cancelled the Summer Olympic Games in Atlanta out of respect for those who perished on TWA Flight 800, Libyan leader Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi said Friday [26 July].

Speaking to AFP, al-Qadhdhafi said he "regretted" the fact that the "Atlanta carnival" — as he put it — was allowed to proceed after 230 people died in the July 17 blast that brought down the Paris-bound Boeing 747 off New York's Long Island.

"It would have been more human to cancel the Atlanta games or to postpone them as a gesture of condolence for the hundreds of victims of this sad disaster," he added.

The loss of TWA Flight 800 — possibly at the hands of terrorists, investigators say — occurred two days before the opening of the Atlanta games, which mark the 100th anniversary of the modern Olympic movement.

Libya, accused in the West of backing terrorism, has been subjected to an international embargo since 1992 after Britain and the United States accused Libyan nationals of planting a bomb on a Pan American Boeing 747 that blew up over Lockerbie, Scotland in December 1988, killing 270 people.

Libya: Commentary Rejects U.S. Economic Sanctions Policy

LD2607100296 Tripoli JANA in English
0849 GMT 26 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tripoli, 26 Jul (JANA) — It was reported that the American House of Representatives had endorsed the bill that provides for imposing sanctions on companies that do business with the countries that reject American domination.

The JAMAHIRIYA NEWS AGENCY international affairs editor commented on the this and said: This decision is a form of state-sponsored terrorism, even if this time it took an economic feature, after having been practiced by its most savage military feature against the Great Jamahiriya in 1986, while the political feature of the terrorist sponsor has never ceased up to this moment.

This decision reveals an irresponsible position. It relects an irrational logic since it reflects submission to barbarism and the lack of interest in any equitable relation with other nations ;or the need to build these relations on joint common interests; or non-interference in the internal affairs of other nations; or obstructing their development programs, or confiscating their [word indistinct] in building progress over their territory and the adoption of an independent policy that is beyond any domination or hegemony.

The editor added [words indistinct] constitutes an inhumane conduct targetted again the Arab Libyan people, inflicting damage on their economy and starving their people as its main objective, it is considered at the same time as an attempt to flout the position of those countries which reject the American action to force the Security Council to escalate the unfair sanctions against the Great Jamahiriya.

This decision comes as a declaration of economic war against the [words indistinct] states, dealing a severe blow to these countries and their companies with aim of allowing American companies to monopolise the control over the world economy and international markets.

The international affairs editor concluded his comments by saying: the so-called sanctions policy of [words indistinct] decision of the American Congress [words indistinct] it does not serve their real interests and does not maintain their natural relations with other nations. In fact this policy seeks to antagonise the world and intensify the isolation of America within the international community at a time when the support for the Great Jamahiriya is mounting from world states and solidarity is being enhanced by the international community against the unfair sanctions imposed on them as a repeat of this erraneous policy which [word indistinct] relations and destablizes the world and undermines international peace and security.

Libya: European Companies Reject U.S. Sanctions Decisions

LD2707085196 Tripoli JANA in English
0814 GMT 27 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Brussels, Nasser [July] 27, JANA — A number of European companies rejected the American decision to impose sanctions againts foreign companies which deal with countries which reject American policy of hegemony. The companies stresed that they will continue to cooperate with these countries.

A spokesman for the French oil company Total said that there was no American decision which will prevent us from investing and cooperating with these countries.

Sudan

Sudan: Al-Turabi Says 2 Mubarak Attackers Traveled via Sudan

NC2907111496 Cairo MENA in Arabic
0935 GMT 29 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 29 Jul (MENA)—Dr. Hasan al-Turabi, speaker of the Sudanese National Council (Parliament), has admitted that two people involved in the assassination attempt on President Mubarak in Addis Ababa in July 1995 entered Ethiopia from Sudan and returned after the attempt failed.

Al-Turabi tried to justify himself in a statement to the Egyptian opposition paper AL-AHRAR today, saying that Sudan is a large country that borders nine others. It is easy to cross these vast borders, he added.

The Sudanese official condemned the assassination attempt on President Mubarak, saying he does not denounce it out of courtesy or to declare his innocence of the accusation that he had any connection with it, but does so on the basis of Islamic laws, which forbid the shedding of blood.

Al-Turabi expressed his hope that the recent Arab summit in Cairo would be a landmark for uniting Arabs in the face of Israeli extremism.

Sudan: Demonstrations in Khartoum; Arrests on Eritrean Border

MM2607150896 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 26 Jul 96 p 6

[Unattributed report: "Protest Demonstrations in the Sudanese Universities of Khartoum and Omdurman"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — Sudanese opposition sources said yesterday that students at Khartoum and Omdurman national universities had staged protest demonstrations in the Omdurman market and al-Thawrat districts. They added that the demonstrators took to the streets until they reached the central Khartoum market area, and that residents of the neighboring districts joined the students in the demonstrations.

The sources said that the Sudanese security authorities quelled the demonstrations, while the official paper AL-SUDAN AL-HADITH reported that some National Democratic Grouping [NDG] elements were arrested for "trying to carry out limited acts of sabotage after crossing from Eritrea into Sudan over the eastern borders."

In an exclusive statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, Mubarak al-Fadil al-Mahdi, secretary general of the opposition NDG, denied knowledge of the NDG elements' arrest on the borders with Eritrea, and said that, some days ago, Khartoum had focused its attention on Eritrea when there were reports of a military attack against Sudan from across the border.

He stressed, however, that there were recent arrests in Sudan because of the tension between the government and the opposition and the protest demonstrations against the Khartoum regime's policies, but that these reports did not appear in the government media.

Mubarak al-Mahdi said that escalating the demonstrations is one of the opposition's methods of confronting the Khartoum regime, following the opposition's 10 June memorandum in which it asked the regime to relinquish power and warned that it had other means of exerting pressure on it; it seems that demonstrations are one of them.

In the same context, the day before yesterday, the victory of the NDG students' lists in the Omdurman National University students union elections led the security authorities and supporters of the ruling [National] Islamic Front in Khartoum to provoke the students. According to opposition sources, this caused the demonstrations to flare up.

The sources added that the Sudanese Government recently announced that the start of the academic year will be postponed by one week, from 3 to 10 August. There are reports that it might be postponed further if the situation does not improve and if tension with the opposition persists.

Sudan: 'New Sudan Force for Peace' Created

EA2707174496 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 0430 GMT 27 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Another faction of the sons of the Nubah Mountains has announced its split from Garang's movement. An announcement was made on the birth of a new organization named the New Sudan Force for Peace.

A statement to this effect was made at a news conference held in Nairobi yesterday by Commander Yunus Carlo, head of the political leadership of the new organization which includes all sons of southern Kordofan and the Nubah Mountains who are attached to the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement [SPLM], Garang's movement.

Commander Carlo added at the news conference that members of the New Sudan Force for Peace are ready for dialogue in order to reach a democratic peaceful solution to what he termed: the problem of the Nubah Mountains in particular, and Sudan in general. [passage omitted]

Kuwait

Kuwait: Government Backs Reelection of UN Secretary General

LD2707145896 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1400 GMT 27 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kuwait City, 27 Jul [KUNA] — Kuwait today announced its support for an African decision taken earlier this month to back the candidacy of the UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali, for a second mandate.

In a statement to the Kuwaiti news agency KUNA, an official source at the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry said that "the State of Kuwait supports the decision taken by the OAU summit held in Cameroon from 8 to 10 July 1996 to back the candidacy of Dr. Butrus- Ghali for a second mandate as UN secretary general."

The source added: "It [Kuwait] also believes that the post of secretary general should go to Africa for a second term, as has been the practice before, whether it is Dr. Butrus-Ghali or anyone else [from Africa]."

The source also said that Dr. Butrus-Ghali "has the full support of the State of Kuwait, its attention and esteem."

Qatar

Qatar: Foreign Minister on U.S. Ties, Other Issues

JN2707082096 Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 26 Jul 96 pp 38-41

[Interview with Qatari Foreign Minister Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim by Muhammad Wajdi Qandil in Doha; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Qandil] Does Iran pose a threat to Qatar? Does the deployment of U.S. fighter aircraft have anything to do with Iranian threats to the security of Gulf nations?

[Bin-Jasim] To give you an answer, I must be frank and very precise. First of all, Iran is a neighborly country. We and the Iranians must understand that we are neighbors in this region. Therefore, the two sides must embark on a frank and honest dialogue to solve problems within this context. Bilateral cooperation will follow once there is confidence between the two sides. Confidence could vary from one state to another, according to its circumstances. Anything that harms any Gulf country harms the security of the State of Qatar. We are committed to this principle, which is familiar to the Iranians, Iraqis, and others. At the same time, however, we believe in maintaining good relations with Iran and opening a frank dialogue with it to explore avenues for cooperation and for promoting relations. This needs time and goodwill. It also requires open channels from both sides. Iran must be part of the Gulf region, but not the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC]. This is because it exists in the region and all Gulf states have joint borders with it. Tension, therefore, is neither in the interest of Iran nor the GCC.

From this perspective, we may differ a little with the Americans, since we cannot deal with Iran from the U.S. perspective. This is because the containment policy affects the Iranian people and there must be sufficient justification for it. The Americans and others may have such justifications, but we view these justifications from a different angle and we also have our own way of dealing with this issue. A superpower like the United States can make a decision to contain Iran, but it is a different situation for Gulf nations. This is because we live in this region and we do not want any problems or wars with Iran or anybody else.

[Qandil] Iranian Defense Minister Mohammad Foruzandeh visited Doha last May reportedly to bolster relations between the two countries. Is there security and military coordination between Doha and Tehran, or is this meant to contain Iranian threats, given that Qatar had been an open bridge for Iranian-Iraqi contacts during the Iran-Iraq war?

[Bin-Jasim] Let me first explain that the visit was in response to an earlier visit by the Qatari defense minister a year before. There was a preplanned agenda for the meeting, such as the Iranian warships that visited Doha and other Gulf states. I wish all Gulf states would have good relations with Iran, because this will make the situation quiet and this is in the interest of all Gulf nations. Therefore, the visit was a normal one and the talks were normal talks between two neighborly countries.

There is no secret alliance between Qatar and Iran. There are no Iranian troops in Qatar, as some people claim, especially since Iran does not see eye to eye with us on U.S. military deployment in Qatar. We do not deny the deployment of U.S. troops, stemming from our honesty with neighborly countries. If the Americans blame Qatar for its relations with Iran, I tell them: We have strategic relations with the United States. We have relations with Iran and with Israel. As a small country, we have to have good relations with everybody.

[Qandil] I would like to pose a certain question. Is the U.S. deployment in Qatar part of security arrangements in the region?

[Bin-Jasim] It is natural for our allies to deploy as part of security arrangements in the region. The Gulf states continue to have some sort of security fears and thus, they do not mind a U.S. presence!

[Qandil] Regarding steps toward normalization with Israel, at the summit in Cairo, you clearly reiterated Qatar's commitment to the summit's resolutions and to joint Arab action — just as the foreign minister of Oman did — in the event that Netanyahu's government fails to commit itself to the principles of the peace process and the Madrid terms of reference. Does this mean that Qatar will freeze normalization steps, including the natural gas agreement? Or will it slow down until the situation becomes clear?

[Bin-Jasim] At the Madrid conference, Qatar agreed to hold talks with Israel and thus, we were committed to the Madrid terms of reference. I am convinced that if dealing with the enemy helps to get to know its ideas, then why not? We might agree and we might differ, which is what sometimes happened between us and Israel — particularly with Shim'on Peres when he was foreign minister. We did not agree with Peres on everything. We spoke clearly to Peres about Arab rights. But, the Americans viewed our openness with Israel in a favorable light, and we deal with them upfront. There are joint Qatari-U.S. interests and U.S. companies have big investments in Qatari gas that reach $30 billion. Therefore, we have an interest with the Americans in maintaining security in the region!

Regarding Israel, Peres' visit to Qatar was not within the context of making decisions and reaching agreements, but we held talks about normalization. In light of Netanyahu's stand, we are now reassessing the situation. We are not in a hurry to do so and I believe we should give the Israeli Government time to clearly define its stand!

[Qandil] After Netanyahu assumed power, were there any exploratory contacts between Qatar and Israel?

[Bin-Jasim] Actually, Netanyahu contacted and spoke to me personally. I was clear with him that there are Arab rights, which cannot be relinquished. I told Netanyahu: Our relations with you are based on progress on the Syrian, Jordanian, Palestinian, and Lebanese tracks. If this does not take place, we will reconsider our relations and look at what should be done in this regard?

While I was in New York a few days before the Arab summit, I spoke with the Americans about this issue. I met with Secretary of State Warren Christopher and explained to him Qatar's stand and told him that it will not change regarding Arab rights.

[Qandil] Before the Cairo summit, you carried a special message to Syrian officials in Damascus dealing with Qatar's stand on steps toward normalization with Israel, and their link to progress in the peace process on Israel's part. Why this urgent message and what prompted it?

[Bin-Jasim] In fact, a third Arab party asked me to pay this visit to clearly reassure the Syrians about steps toward normalization with Israel. The message affirmed to the Syrians the following: Just as we supported you in the past in your demand for Syrian rights, we continue to do so. However, peace should be a strategic option for us and the Israeli side should recognize this principle. Moreover, we should study steps that could be taken. As for us in Qatar, we will not deviate from the Arab consensus. However, there should be an Arab consensus and a defined stand on every particular point.

[Qandil] It is noticed that Qatar has good relations with Iran, Iraq, the United States, and Israel. This is a developed perception and a new tone for the GCC states. Can you explain this difficult equation?

[Bin-Jasim] As a state we should first know what we want. Qatar is a small Gulf state which cannot be an aggressive state. Secondly, we believe that good relations with all sides, despite differences, serve the GCC. At the same time, we do not allow these relations to affect or undermine any Arab state. We also have priorities on the Arab, Islamic, and international levels. We respect the international resolutions and implement them. We might have differences in viewpoints. However, these differences have limits and do not disrupt any Arab states' interests.

[Qandil] What about the natural gas agreement with Israel and the normalization of relations through this agreement?

[Bin-Jasim] Much has been said about the natural gas issue. The Egyptian Government and Israel know the truth. To begin with, I would like to clarify that there is no natural gas agreement between Qatar and Israel, but an agreement through a U.S. company which sells gas to any party. Secondly, this agreement will not affect the Suez Canal because the Qatari production is for the Israeli, Jordanian, and Palestinian consumption. It is approximately two million tonnes per year. When the Israelis began to talk to us we told them: We will not talk to you directly. You should talk to us through the U.S. company. There are major constants, the most important of which is that Qatar does not compete with Egypt for natural gas and that priority is given to the Egyptian gas. This is clear and recorded. The Israelis told the U.S. company that from a strategic viewpoint, they will not take from one source. This is a logical approach which is pursued by all states; namely, the diversification of resources. They said that they want gas from Qatar, Egypt, and other parties. We then told them: Alright, if this is the way you deal with this issue, then we will be ready to deal with you. Later, many sides raised the issue of the Suez Canal and the pipeline from Qatar, something which was not discussed and will not be discussed. This is because Qatar will not do anything that would harm any Arab state even if we have differences with this Arab state, how about our strong relations with Egypt?

[Qandil] Coordination between Qatar and Saudi Arabia was clear at the Cairo summit, particularly regarding Iraq's return to the Arab fold and attendance of the Arab summits, something which encouraged Crown Prince 'Abdallah to thank you and to praise Qatar's stand. Does this mean that Qatar has changed its stand toward Iraq to improve its relations with Saudi Arabia despite the fact that it was the first Gulf state to restore relations with the Iraqi regime after the Gulf war?

[Bin-Jasim] I would like to stress that Qatar's stand toward Iraq is clear. Iraq should comply with the UN resolutions. The Iraqi people's suffering should end. We work for this through the United Nations. Qatar has for five years been sending food and medicine supplies to Iraq. Most of these medicines and foodstuffs are purchased from Cairo and the United Nations is aware of this. This is because Arab values do not accept the Iraqi people's conditions. We should bear in mind that Iraq has an old civilization and a deep- rooted Arab and Islamic history. This means that when we speak about the Mesopotamia civilization, just like the Nile civilization, then we should realize that what we are talking about is an important pillar in the Arab world. However, this does not mean that we approve of the Iraqi Government's policy. Based on this, when we pressure Iraq through UN resolutions, then we will be doing so out of concern for Iraq. We are not against Iraq, and we are trying to save it from the problems which would result from its policies.

[Qandil] Where does Qatar stand on the attempts to divide Iraq through the air embargo in the north and south and the continuation of the blockade, which helps legitimize division as time goes by? Do you think it is possible to return Iraq to the Arab rank in order to face the imbalance of power in the Gulf, given that Iraq is an active and influential Arab force as far as pan-Arab security is concerned?

[Bin-Jasim] We are completely occupied with the attempts to divide Iraq. Three years ago we learned that the big countries are discussing the issue of dividing Iraq. I toured three or four countries to discuss this serious question. I made it clear to them that such a plan will be tantamount to fragmenting the Arab world and will not be accepted by the Arab countries. I told them in clear terms: The Arab world will turn against you if you think of dividing Iraq. The big countries, including the United States, realize that dividing Iraq will not be in the interest of the region.

[Qandil] How do you see the possibility of Iraq's return to the Arab rank under the current circumstances?

[Bin-Jasim] In fact, Iraq was present at the Arab League and the United Nations. I wish it had been at the Arab summit in Cairo. However, there were some sensitivities. I believe that Iraq's return relies on two points: 1) The Arab world is part of the international community. Hence, Iraq should comply with the international resolutions; 2) The Arabs should initiate a frank dialogue with Iraq. If there are any problems, we should look for a direct solution to them. What happened is over now. The split took place and the harm was done. The Arab world went into debt because of the crisis. The reserves were squandered during the Gulf war. Who was the cause and who was wrong?

The Arab countries as well as Iraq have duties. Iraq should exhibit good intentions. On the other hand, there should be a frank dialogue with our brothers in Iraq in order to arrive at solutions and ensure that what happened will not be repeated by Iraq or by any other Arab country. Iraq should thus return to the Arab umbrella because it is a major buttress in the Arab world.

[Qandil] Regarding relations with Bahrain, is there any solution in sight for the problem of Hawar island and the border dispute following your visit to Manama and meeting with Bahraini Amir Shaykh 'Isa?

[Bin-Jasim] During the Arab summit in Cairo, there was a proposal to clear the atmosphere and settle the island dispute. However, Qatar's viewpoint was that the issue cannot be settled in this way. We sincerely want to reach a solution. However, this solution has its foundations, and the case was presented to the International Court of Justice. As part of the agreements that were reached, there is a mediator who is authorized to present solutions to the two parties.

My visit to Bahrain was a gesture of good will on the part of Qatar to mend fences. We hope that we will get a favorable response. We are trying to normalize relations between the two countries, given that the two countries' peoples are closely related to each other. For its part, Qatar will make all gestures of good will. We are ready to build a bridge between Qatar and Bahrain and put the border dispute aside until everybody cools down.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia: 'Arafat Arrives in Jeddah 28 Jul

JN2807191896 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1800 GMT 28 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat arrived in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, at noon today on a two-day official visit. During the visit, 'Arafat will hold talks with King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, custodian of the two holy mosques; Saudi Crown Prince 'Abdallah; and several senior officials.

The president will brief the Saudi officials on the latest political developments in the Palestine question, as well as Israel's violations in occupied Jerusalem.

President 'Arafat and Saudi officials will also discuss the possibility for more Palestinians to work in Saudi Arabia in order to ease the economic burden from which the Palestinian people are suffering as a result of the continued Israeli siege.

His excellency the president was received at Jeddah International Airport by Prince Sa'ud bin-'Abd-al-Muhsin, deputy amir of the Mecca Governorate; Saudi Minister of State 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Khuwaytir; several senior Saudi civilian and military officials; and Mustafa Hashim al-Shaykh Dib, Palestinian ambassador to Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Arabia: King Fahd, 'Arafat Discuss Peace Process, Regional Issues

LD2807220696 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 2045 GMT 28 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Jiddah, 28 Jul — King Fahd Bin-'Abd- al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, the custodian of the two holy mosques, may God preserve him, today at al-Salam Palace, received Yasir 'Arafat, the president of the State of Palestine, and the delegation accompanying him. [passage omitted]

During the meeting the latest developments on the Arab and international scene and the progress of the peace process in the region were discussed.

His Excellency President 'Arafat is accompanied by Mahmud Abbas, the secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee; Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat, the minister for local government; Al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, the Presidency's secretary general; Dr. As'ad 'Abd-al-Rahman, a member of the PLO's Executive Committee; and Mustapha Hashim al-Shaykh Dib, the Palestinian ambassador to the Kingdom.

Saudi Arabia: Sudanese Opposition Office Said Closed, Activity Banned

NC2707093696 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0925 GMT 27 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Khartoum, 27 Jul (MENA)—Press reports in Khartoum indicate that Saudi Arabia closed the Sudanese opposition's only office in Riyadh last week and has banned all activity by the Sudanese opposition in the Kingdom.

The newspaper AL-NASR, the mouthpiece of the Sudanese Armed Forces, today reports that Saudi security forces conveyed to the Sudanese oppositionists the Saudi political decision issued in this regard. The paper adds that the departure of Saudi opposition businessman Usamah Bin-Ladin from Sudan has met with satisfaction in official Saudi circles.

Yemen

Yemen: Oman Transfers Powers Over Border Areas

JN2707190896 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 27 Jul 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] In accordance with the border demarcation agreement signed between our country and the Government of sisterly Oman on 1 October 1993, the second and final phase of the process of the transfer of powers over the areas and structures evacuated by sisterly Oman started in Shihan area today.

The transfer of powers ceremony was attended for our country by [al-Mahrah Governor] Hasan Maqbul al-Ahdal; Colonel Yahya al-'Amri, Interior Ministry under secretary; the deputy governor of al-Mahrah; and a number of administrative and security officials in the governorate.

The government of sisterly Oman was represented by Shaykh Hamad Bin-'Ali al-Ghafiri, deputy governor of Dhofar Governorate, and a number of Omani officials.

A responsible source at the Interior Ministry voiced our country's appreciation of the brotherly spirit that prevailed over the process of the transfer of powers to the Republic of Yemen.

YEMENI NEWS AGENCY, SABA', learned that the process of the transfer of powers in al-Sarfit area will be completed tomorrow.

Iraq: Foreign Ministry Statement on Iranian Incursion

NC2907124796 Baghdad INA in Arabic
0948 GMT 29 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 29 Jul (INA)—Iraq announced that Iranian troops committed a fresh aggression on the sanctity of its territorial integrity in the northern areas.

In a statement to INA today, a spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that an Iranian Revolutionary Guard force estimated at 3,000 armed men in more than 120 vehicles carrying ammunition and heavy weapons infiltrated Iraqi territory in the al- Sulaymaniyah Governorate on the night of 26/27 July and headed for the village of Kou Senjaq. The spokesman added that the Iranian force yesterday morning occupied the Hab al-Sultan mountain and the outskirts of Kou Senjaq and shelled some Iraqi civilian positions in the areas of Kou Senjaq and Taqtaq, killing or wounding a number of civilians and inflicting heavy losses on private and public property in those areas.

The spokesman added that the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs today summoned the Iranian charge d'affaires in Baghdad and handed him a protest note expressing the Republic of Iraq's protest against this blatant and unwarrantable aggression and demanding the immediate withdrawal of the invading Iranian troops from Iraqi territory. The note also said that the Iranian Government must bear full responsibility for this action. Iraq reserves its legitimate right to claim full compensation for the damage caused by the aggression and it will do what it deems fit to defend the sanctity and inviolability of its airspace, territorial integrity, water resources, and the security of its people.

The spokesman added that the Iranian aggression is a flagrant violation of the UN Charter, the principles of international law, and the principles of good neighborliness. The aggression is also a blatant violation of the cease-fire resolution between the two countries, Security Council Resolution 598. The Iranian regime's insistence on continuing these hostile actions against Iraq completely contradicts statements made by Iranian officials about their desire to resolve outstanding issues between the two countries and to establish normal relations between them. This requires that Iran first stop these practices and release and repatriate our prisoners.

The spokesman pointed out that this aggression has exposed the true Iranian intentions toward the leadership of Iraq and the integrity of Iraqi territory. At a time when Iran condemns the Turkish forces' entry into Iranian territory to chase some elements of the Kurdistan Workers Party, it does not hesitate to carry out hostile actions on Iraqi territory in violation of the rules of international law.

Iraq: Iranian Kurdish Figures Cited on Shelling, Fighting

NC2807112096 Paris AFP in English
1110 GMT 28 Jul 96

[Iranian names as received]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Irbil, Iraq, July 28 (AFP)—Some 2,000 Iranian troops have launched an armed offensive 50 kilometers (30 miles) inside northern Iraq against Iranian Kurdish guerrillas, officials here said Sunday [28 July].

The Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan [DPIK] officials said their camps near Koi Sanjaq were shelled early Sunday and that fighting between DPIK guerrillas and the Iranian forces was going on around the camps.

"The shelling started on our houses and the hospital at 6.30 this morning and now they (the Iranians) started the attack," Salam Azizi, a member of the leadership of the DPIK, told AFP.

"Several houses are burning, many families started to escape," he added, without giving details of casualties.

Taymoor Mustafay, a DPIK spokesman in Irbil, said: "Three days ago, 200 Iranian vehicles arrived with more than 2,000 Iranian soldiers," adding that they marched to Koi Sanjaq 50 kilometres (30 miles) inside northern Iraq where they attacked DPIK bases.

Iraq: PUK Cited on Raids; Mojahedin-e Khalq Backs Iranian Kurds

JN2907120396 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic
1115 GMT 29 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Iranian troops have continued to deal military blows to fighters of the Iranian Kordestan Democratic Party [KDP] stationed in northern Iraq. Meanwhile, the Iranian opposition group Mojahedin-e Khalq today declared its supports for the Kurds.

The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK] under Jalal Talabani confirmed the incursion into northern Iraq by some 1,000 Iranian troops yesterday. The PUK added that the Iranian troops penetrated 60 km into the areas controlled by Iraqi Kurds in northern Iraq to pursue Iranian Kurds.

The PUK pointed out that the Tehran troops raided the Iranian KDP forces near the city of Kou Senjaq in northern Iraq after entering Iraqi territory from two different points. The PUK added that civilian victims have fallen as a result of the Iranian military operation.

The Iraq-based Mojahedin-e Khalq expressed its support for the Iranian Kurds, who have been under attack by the Iranian Army for several days in northern Iraq. Mas'ud Rajavi, leader of Mojahedin-e Khalq, urged the UN Security Council to take an urgent stand toward the Iranian troops' attacks, which are part of the terrorist plots hatched against Iraqi Kurds, as he put it.

Iraq: PUK Envoy Says Iranian Troops To Leave 'Soon,' Fighting Over

NC2907114596 Paris AFP in English 1140 GMT 29 Jul 96

[Report by Nigah Aram]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Irbil, Iraq, July 29 (AFP)—[Passage omitted] UN officials in northern Iraq said they witnessed fighting on Sunday [28 July] but did not have first-hand information on Monday. "We could see the shelling and hear the pounding," said one who asked not to be named.

Fraydon 'Abd-al Qadir, of the Iraqi Kurdish group the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, told AFP he had been sent to Kou Senjaq by PUK leader Jalal Talabani to broker a truce with Iranian forces.

'Abd-al Qadir added that the Iranian forces would leave Iraqi Kurdistan "very soon," and that fighting had stopped on Monday.

Iraq: SAIRI's al-Hakim Comments on Coup Attempt, Blames CIA

NC2807163996 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1430 GMT 28 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The BBC Arabic service has held an interview with Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, chairman of Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq [SAIRI]. The interview focused on the recent coup attempt in Iraq. In his answers to the BBC correspondent's questions, Shaykh al-Hakim said that the Iraqi Army has made several attempts to change the regime in Iraq over the past three years. He said that these attempts took several forms. Some attempts depended especially on the Republican Guard forces, others sought to marshal the entire Iraqi army, and still others depended on the popular majihidin forces. He stressed that recently the Iraqi Army, particularly Sunni Arab sectors in the army, staged a coup attempt. He noted that in the wake of this attempt the Iraqi regime launched a large-scale arrest campaign in early June among the Republican Guard officers. Our sources inside Iraq say that more than 150 Republican Guard officers were arrested along with Army personnel in units close to Baghdad. Reports later confirmed these figures and said that between 25 to 30 officers were executed late in June and in mid-July.

In reply to a question on the circles behind this attempt, Shaykh al-Hakim said that there is a general rejection of Saddam Husayn's regime by the Iraqi people in general. He said that certain Iraqis abroad tried to rally the Iraqi army but we had doubts about these elements because certain elements suspected of having links with the CIA had penetrated these groups.

He attributed the failure of these attempts to two factors: First, penetration by certain suspicious and strange persons who wish to exploit the domestic situation in Iraq and the popular rejection of Saddam's regime and, second, the suspicious links with the CIA. He said that the CIA does not pursue the interests of Iraq but rather its own goals, even if this might lead to bloodshed and the exposure of the elements that collude with it. He noted that a similar thing happened two years ago when the CIA was accused of exposing elements inside Iraq, which led to the execution of the Raji al-Tikriti group.

Asked the names of those who participated in the latest coup attempt, Shaykh al-Hakim said that there are no well-known names, noting that the Iraqi regime shrouds the issue in strict secrecy. He said that the name of former Air Force commander Khamis Sha'ban was mentioned. He was arrested and then released it was not proved he had any connection with this group. His name was only mentioned as the future president of the republic if the attempt had succeeded.

Asked about the Iraqi opposition group behind the coup attempt that is backed by the CIA, Shaykh al-Hakim said: I am not saying that there is an Iraqi opposition group, because the entire opposition is seeking to effect a change in Iraq. There are, however, individuals who are trying to take advantage of the opportunity.

Iraq: Opposition Figure Reports Failure of CIA-Planned Coup

JN2907063496 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 0500 GMT 29 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In an interview with the Kuwaiti newspaper AL-RA'Y AL-'AMM, to be published today, Iraqi opposition leader Shaykh Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim said the United States, in cooperation with Jordan and another country in the region he did not name, had planned to change the situation in Iraq this month. However, he added, the Iraqi authorities discovered and aborted this coup attempt. He attributed the failure of the coup to infiltrations by suspects who are alien to opposition work, and to the failure of the U.S. intelligence service to move sincerely despite its declared desire to change the situation in Iraq. He placed many question marks on the relationship between Iraqi opposition parties and the Central Intelligence Agency, the CIA.

Iraq: Further on Alleged Attempt To Kill Saddam

JN2907092296 Amman AL-HAQIQAH in Arabic 27 Jul 96 p 4

[Report by the political editor]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its 4 July edition No. 15, AL-HAQIQAH published details about a recent assassination attempt against Iraqi President Saddam Husayn. Arab, as well as world press, also covered the subject with more details. All press sources, including our paper, however, did not point to any side, because nobody admitted responsibility for the attempt.

Today, we would like to confirm all the details published in the 15th edition of our newspaper. In a statement obtained by AL- HAQIQAH, an Iraqi movement operating inside Iraq has admitted responsibility for the incident. The statement contains a description of the attempt that is identical with our story. The movement operates inside Iraq and is called "The Popular Uprising Movement" [harakat al-intifadah al-sha'biyah].

The statement also says that the movement's military command carried out the assassination attempt against the Iraqi president as part of a larger plan to topple him. The statement asserts that the movement includes a large number of Iraqi Army officers from all corps. It also voices support for several Iraqi opposition parties and criticizes a large number of Iraqi opposition wings abroad, accusing them of impotence and loyalty to foreign parties. The statement adds that the movement adheres to Iraq's territorial integrity and independence.

Movement sources said that a group of senior officers who participated in the attempt were executed. Among them were the following:

— Staff Brigadier General Ja'far al-Tayyar, director of training at the Defense Ministry.

— Brigadier General Amjad Tariq 'Aziz, commander of the Administrative Affairs School.

— Staff Colonel Khamis Hadi Ni'mah, commander of the 6th Presidential Guard Brigade.

— Staff Lieutenant Colonel Ahmad al-Nu'aymi, 6th Brigade staff officer.

— Lieutenant Colonel 'Abdallah Sharif al-Rubay'i, 6th Brigade administrative officer.

— Captain Sa'id Mahmud, commander of the missiles battery.

— Captain Husayn 'Ali al-Khalidi, official in charge of protecting retired pilot Lieutenant General Hamid Sha'ban.

— First Lieutenant Lu'ayy Rashid, officer in charge of protecting retired pilot Lt. Gen. Hamid Sha'ban.

Iraqi opposition sources said that as a result, the Iraqi security organs launched a liquidation and arrest campaign against officers from the Dulaym and al-Jubur tribes, in al-Anbar Governorate, and from al-Duri tribe for their alleged participation in the attempt. Members of these tribes formed part of the unit that protected the presidential palace in al-Anbar Government. The palace was destroyed during the assassination attempt.

Iraqi President Saddam Husayn has ordered major changes to his special guard, admitting large numbers from the predominantly al-Sa'dun Sunni tribe, from al-Basrah Governorate and al-Zubayr region, which is adjacent to the border with Kuwait.

A decree was also issued appointing Bandar al-Sa'dun as adviser to President Saddam Husayn. This tribe is known for its absolute loyalty to the Iraqi president, and some of its members have held sensitive government posts since the Iraqi president began depending on this tribe because of a lack of confidence in other tribes that have long had major roles in the units that protect him.

In a separate development, Iraqi opposition sources in northern Iraq stated that Staff Lieutenant General Tali' Ruhayyim al-Duri sought refuge in Turkey via northern Iraq. Lt. Gen. Tali' had held several leading posts in the Iraqi Army, including the post of 3d Army Corps commander during the war with Iran and the post of 4th Army Corps commander. He was a member of the Army Staff Command during the Kuwait war. He was appointed Babil governor in the aftermath of the March 1991 uprising, which took place after the withdrawal of the Iraqi Army from Kuwait. It is suspected that he took part in the assassination attempt.

On the political level, and in the aftermath of Iraq's success in its relations with the United Nations, which approved its recent food distribution plan and the methods of selling oil in exchange for food per Resolution 986, informed sources stated that the Iraqi Government formed committees to examine the debts owed to Iraq by Arab states, which total $2 billion, according to Iraqi Government sources. The Iraqi Government will demand that the repayment of these debts be rescheduled. Of the countries that owe money to Iraq are the following: Kuwait, Qatar, Syria, Egypt, Yemen, Sudan, Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania, and Lebanon. Iraq's demand in this regard is prompted by its need for hard currency. It also needs the money to settle debts it owes to several countries which began to demand settlement after Iraq accepted Resolution 986.

The sources added that Iraq is seriously examining withdrawal from the Arab League. It sent several memorandums to the Arab League secretary general in this regard, asking the Arab League to articulate its position and make clear how serious its resolutions are, particularly with regard to political crises and the blackmail to which Iraq and the Arab League itself are exposed.

The mistrust between Iraq and the Arab League was aggravated by Iraq's nonparticipation in the recent Arab summit held in Cairo in late June, which prompted Iraq to think seriously of withdrawing from the Arab League, even though it is a founding member.

Iraq: Saddam's First Wife Reportedly Under House Arrest

JN2807192196 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1215 GMT 28 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The opposition newspaper BAGHDAD says that Saddam the despot placed his first wife, Sajidah Khayrallah, under house arrest in one of his palaces in the village of al-'Awja'. The newspaper says that the despot justified his decision by saying that his wife conspired against him and is involved in an attempt on his life.

The newspaper cites the despot as saying during a meeting with some members of his tribe in Tikrit that he has been practically separated from his wife since 1984. He also revealed that his wife knew that his two sons-in-law fled to Jordan last August, noting that he is sure that Saddam Kamil consulted her before he, his brother, and their wives fled to Jordan. The despot said that Sajidah Khayrallah prevented her brothers Lu'ayy, Mudar, and Waddah Khayrallah from taking part in the attack on Husayn Kamil on 23 February.

This measure comes within the framework of escalating differences conflicts within members of the ruling family that are fighting among each other for wealth and power.

Iraq: Qusayy Husayn Reportedly Removes Relatives From Positions

NC2707152596 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi People in Arabic 1400 GMT 27 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] News agency correspondents in Baghdad have reported that Qusayy, son of the tyrant and the one responsible for the security and special protection forces, has been waging a new campaign against his relatives since the beginning of the month. Correspondents say those being removed from key positions this time round are the relatives of his mother, Sajidah.

Lu'ayy, the son of the butcher's brother-in-law, has been moved to a symbolic position in the department for the protection of war veterans; he used to be a ranking official in the Defense Ministry. Qusayy has also taken back the special identity card used by the regime which allows the three sons of the butcher's brother-in-law to do anything with impunity [words indistinct] in the governorates and border points by taking the necessary measures to prevent the sons of the butcher's brother-in-law from moving around and travelling.

The correspondents add that the measures taken against Watban and Sab'awi last month, which decreased their residence [words indistinct] valid, to prevent them from fleeing outside Iraq on the pretext that they are going to Jordan for medical care. The correspondents report that all those who are associated with or close to Sab'awi and Watban [words indistinct] and expelled from the positions they have acquired. Among those are Captain Na'im al- Sukayfi, who works in the private security forces, and Hasan Ibrahim, who is a manager in the Interior Ministry.

Iraq: KDP Accused of Shelling Residential Areas Near Irbil

NC2707190996 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1700 GMT 27 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Kurdistan Democratic Party's [KDP] forces carried out an intensive artillery bombardment of the (Banisawa) residential neighborhood near Irbil two days ago. The shelling resulted in the martyrdom of the renowned religious scholar Sayyid Ahmad 'Ali Ahmad, imam and preacher of the (Gemedi) neighborhood mosque in Irbil. The indiscriminate shelling wounded religious scholar Muhammad Amin Karim, member of Irbil's Islamic Ulema Association, who was on his way with the martyred imam to the bombarded village to help settle a dispute.

The Islamic Ulema Association of Kurdistan has issued a statement condemning the irresponsible actions of the KDP forces which shell civilian areas with heavy artillery and machine guns, thus breaking existing ceasefire agreements.

Last night the KDP forces shelled the Shawish and Pirzin residential neighborhoods near Irbil with heavy artillery. Tariq Sulayman, a member of the fourth unit of Irbil's peshmerga forces, was martyred in this attack.

Iraq: Opposition Radio Says More Than 40 Officers Executed

NC2807145096 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi People in Arabic 1400 GMT 28 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] According to Iraqi opposition sources, the dictator's repressive organs are continuing their arbitrary measures against elements the regime suspects had links with Husayn Kamil [executed son-in-law of Saddam Husayn] and his brother Saddam.

The sources say some government officials who were [words indistinct] have been transferred to other jobs. Additionally, a number of other officials who prepared the military industrialization plans and programs have been arrested.

Reports received by the opposition confirm that [words indistinct] and that these executions involved more than 40 army officers from various ranks [words indistinct] in the northwest of Iraq. They said that the officers were executed in the Nahrawan area in Diyala Governorate after being charged with treason and collaboration with Husayn Kamil and his brother.

The reports add that elements loyal to Husayn Kamil and members of his family are now waging a campaign of revenge against the regime's establishments and officials.

Iraq: KDP Claim of Obtaining Weapons from Syria Debunked

NC2807183696 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1700 GMT 28 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A spokesman for the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK] Political Bureau has stated the following: The Kurdistan Democratic Party [KDP] is circulating rumors among its members and the people that some of the weapons it is currently receiving and distributing to its armed men were purchased from Ukraine and received via Syria and that the rest were a present from Syria to the KDP.

We are convinced that Syria is not prepared to provide the KDP with weapons to antagonize the PUK or any other party in the Iraqi opposition, particularly since the PUK has friendly ties with Syria. The fact is that the KDP is getting these weapons from the Iraqi regime and in order to cover up this crime it claims that it obtains the weapons from Syria.

Iraq: Hizballah Denies PUK Report on Differences With KDP

JN2807094596 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Kurdistan in Arabic 1800 GMT 27 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Revolutionary Hizballah Party Information Bureau has issued the following clarification:

On the evening of 23 July, the radio of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK] broadcast a fabricated report claiming that there are differences between the Revolutionary Hizballah Party forces and the Kurdistan Democratic Party [KDP] in the Hajj 'Umran area and that the two sides resorted to arms.

We refute the PUK report, which is totally untrue, and declare that there are no differences between Hizballah forces and the KDP. Relations between the two sides are normal and friendly.

Iraq: Four Security Personnel Killed in Clash With Tribe

JN2707172696 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1215 GMT 27 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Four of the regime's security personnel were killed in an armed clash in the southern part of the country between the Al Qawwan tribe and a regime's security force that tried to storm a number of the citizens' houses.

The newspaper AL-SHAHADAH, organ of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq [SAIRI], said that an armed clash took place in the al-Nasiriyah Governorate after the regime's security forces stormed [word indistinct] Al Qawwan. The paper pointed out that citizens in the village confronted the aggressors who tried to confiscate the farmers' crops.

The paper said that four of the regime's security forces were killed during the clash.

Similar clashes took place in a number of the southern areas over the past two months, after the ruling party thieves and the regime's security forces stole the farmers' crops on the pretext that they were not delivered to the Trade Ministry centers.

Iraq: Opposition Executes Ba'th Party Member in al-Nasiriyah

JN2707171896 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1215 GMT 27 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The opposition newspaper AL-JIHAD said that a group of the martyr al-Sadr forces executed criminal Hadi Humud 'Aryan, member of the authority's party branch in al-Nasiriyah and official in charge of the Mother of Battles section.

The group also meted punishment out to criminal Salim Dawud Salman, member of the al-Nasiriyah section and director of the [word indistinct] factory in the governorate.

The paper said that earlier another group fired at and killed criminal [name and title indistinct].

The sources stressed that confusion and anxiety prevail among the 'Aflaqites party ranks in al-Nasiriyah following the murder of most of the party leaders and that the party suffers from a crisis from trying to determine the reliable persons who can fill the party's vacant posts.

Iraq: Opposition Group Reportedly Kills Police Officer in Baghdad

JN2707150796 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1215 GMT 27 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A group of mujahidin attacked and killed one of the regime's police officers in Baghdad early this month.

Our sources said that a police officer with the rank of major was killed in the Hamzah square in the al-Hadidiyah area early this month after a group of the mujahidin fired at the criminals.

Our sources said that the police officer was killed immediately and that other policemen failed to aid him.

Our sources quoted an official in charge of the mujahidin group as saying that this operation was in response to the officer's provocations against the citizens and dealers in the Hamzah square in the al-Hadidiyah area. He stressed that most of the policemen extort protection money from the citizens and threaten to arrest them if they fail to pay.

The mujahidin source warned the regime's elements against attacking innocent people and taking part of the citizens' livelihood, stressing that punishment will be dealt to anyone who exploits the innocent people under the double conspiratorial blockade.

Iraq: Regime Reportedly Recruits Children To Join 'Death Camps'

NC2707151496 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi People in Arabic 1400 GMT 27 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In one of its recent desperate attempts to attract a new batch of Iraq's children to join the camps that are called Saddam's cub scouts, the ruling dictatorship has called on Iraqi children between 10-15 years old to attend these camps. Iraqi sources say that the children are avoiding going to these death camps.

The sources say many of the children's parents have publicly announced that they will not allow their children to go to these treason camps, which the regime calls Saddam's fedayeen. They say they are ready to face the inevitable fate that awaits them from the regime's organs. They affirmed that every zealous citizen will not permit his child to attend these camps.

In addition, sources close to these suspicious camps have revealed terrible images of the suffering and deprivation the trainees there go through. They said joining these camps is akin to suicide, particularly for innocent children of this age group.

Iraq: 309 'Children' Claimed To Die in 'Saddam Fedayeen' Camps

NC2807153696 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1430 GMT 28 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] More than 300 children who had been receiving compulsory training in regime-run camps belonging to the so-called Saddam Fedayeen forces have died. These forces are commanded by 'Udayy, son of the tyrant Saddam.

According to Iraqi opposition sources, 309 children have died in the al-Taji, Mansuriyat al-Jabal, Mosul, al-Najaf, and al-Diwaniyah camps as a result of strenuous training and the overpowering heat.

Iraq: Former Air Force Chief on Saddam's Fedayeen

JN2707143296 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 21 Jul 96 p 7

[FBIS Translated Text] [Mahmud] Leader President Saddam Husayn has paid special attention to the education of the Iraqi individual. In particular, he supports those who defend Iraq and its revolution. This is part of the president's efforts to tap latent energy. How do you characterize the president's attention to Saddam's Fedayeen?

[Al-Hasan] The circumstances in our country require mobilizing all energy to face the unjust challenge created by Zionism and the United States. The greater the challenge, the greater the mobilization. Saddam's Fedayeen represent the great Arab chivalry of our great people. Young people have spontaneously volunteered to be the soldiers of the leader and the revolution. They are would-be martyrs in defense of the leader, the march, Iraq, and the glorious Arab nation. The Saddam Fedayeen regiments were formed while our country was going through a critical stage. These regiments were formed all over the country. They are ready to carry out combat missions. As for the cubs, they are the support force. They are the flowers and loved ones of the leader. They are 10 to 15 years old. They also volunteered to join, with the approval of their families. This year, a large number of cubs turned out. We were embarrassed because our training establishments cannot accommodate thousands of cubs. We had planned for a camp that accommodates half the number of those who turned out. It was difficult for us to tell the extras that they had to go back or wait to join another group. There are measures that organize the rights and duties of the fedayeen and the cubs.

Leader President Saddam Husayn, may God watch over him, has these formations at heart. He instructed that all requirements be made available to enable the fedayeen to accomplish their missions successfully and to hold periodic training camps for the cubs. Hostile parties have begun to monitor news about the Saddam Fedayeen formations and their missions and training. The name Saddam's Fedayeen has caused concern for those people.

[Mahmud] How do you relate the experiment of Saddam's Fedyaeen and Cubs to the intellectual and political education of the new generation that has seen the revolution's achievements and learned about the leader's thoughts?

[Al-Hasan] These formations are the fruit of the revolution. They are part of the march and the defense of the achievements of the revolution and the leader. They are also a tributary of the Armed Forces. When there is a foreign threat, part of their mission will be to defend the homeland's soil. The same applies to internal security. They have received good training, and they have the capability and preparation to defend the revolution's achievements. They are the soldiers of the revolution. In addition to military training, they have been prepared intellectually, politically, and educationally.

[Mahmud] A large number of youth are joining the training camps. The commission supervising the training has made a number of preparations. What can we conclude from these indications?

[Al-Hasan] They clearly indicate success. Moreover, the hopes of the enemies, who bet on perpetuating the blockade and creating a gap and severing the genuine spiritual relationship between the leader and the people, have not been and will never be realized. We have clear evidence. The Great March Day is an example of the spiritual bond between the people and the leader. The voluntary joining of the formations of the cubs and fedayeen indicates that the relationship between the cubs and fedayeen on the one hand and the leader and revolution on the other is one of love, allegiance, and loyalty.

[Mahmud] What is the relationship between Saddam's Cubs and Fedayeen and the 17-30 July Revolution, which was sparked and led by leader President Saddam Husayn 28 years ago?

[Al-Hasan] The revolution is that of the people. The gains of the revolution go to the people. The gains that were made by the revolution that was led by leader President Saddam Husayn, may God watch over him, are preserved by the people through defending the revolution and great Iraq. The leader will remain the symbol and will be preserved. The large-scale voluntary joining of these formations is a manifestation of the genuine relationship between the leader and the revolution and its soldiers.

[Mahmud] Will any legal and organizational framework be worked out for this experiment in the future?

[Al-Hasan] A law was drawn up specifying the tasks and duties of the fedayeen and cubs. There is also an organizational legal framework that guarantees the service, rights, and duties. It also provides for special privileges commensurate with the work of the fedayeen, given that when the fedayeen joined the formation, they did not think of the privileges. The privileges are commensurate with the distinguished work of the fedayeen. Their rights in the event of accidents and injuries are guaranteed. The privileges that are given to the wounded and martyrs of Saddam's glorious al-Qadisiyah and the eternal Mother of Battles apply to them. The law will be announced shortly, God willing.

[Mahmud] Did any agencies support this experience?

[Al-Hasan] Yes, we received support from the regional secretariat; the party's branches; the Ministries of Culture, Information, Defense, Industry, Health, Transportation and Communications, Education; the General Union of Iraqi Youth; and the National Union of Iraqi Students. These agencies showed solidarity. I think I should extend my thanks to them.

[Mahmud] When will this group graduate?

[Al-Hasan] Leader President Saddam Husayn, may God protect him, ordered that a central ceremony be held in every governorate in the presence of the comrade members of the command to graduate this group of Saddam's Cubs. A central ceremony will be held in Baghdad at al-Rasafah Training Camp. Special cars will be assigned to drive the families and citizens to the ceremony. A central ceremony will also be held when the fedayeen complete their training.

Iraq: Arrivals in Amman Speak of Ebola-Like Disease in Iraq

JN2807120296 Amman AL-URDUN in Arabic 27 Jul 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] Yesterday, arrivals in Amman spoke about the spread of a new disease in Iraq they called the "hemorrhagic fever" [al- humma al-nazfiyah], which initially causes a rise in body temperature. This is followed by severe bleeding from either the nose, gums, or intestines, which makes the disease similar to the ebola disease that swept Burundi a few years ago.

Baghdad doctors have not discovered how the disease, which kills victims nine days after infection, spreads. To stop the disease spreading, Iraqi authorities have cremated the bodies of victims.

Iraq: PLO Chairman Congratulates Saddam on Prophet's Birthday

JN2807152496 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1320 GMT 28 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 28 Jul (INA) — His Excellency President Saddam Husayn received a cable of congratulations from Yasir 'Arafat, president of the State of Palestine and chairman of the PLO Executive Committee, on the occasion of the prophet's holy birthday.

The cable read as follows: On the occasion of the prophet's holy birthday, it is my pleasure to send my sincerest congratulations to your excellency, as well as to your government and people, in the name of the Palestinian people and the PLO. I beseech the Almighty God that the Arab and Islamic nation will have many returns of this great occasion and our hopes and aspirations to raise the status of the nation are realized. It is our hope that the ranks of the nation will unite so that the nation will occupy the outstanding status that befits it. We hope that our two peoples, as well as the Arab and Islamic peoples, will achieve more progress and prosperity.

I am taking this happy opportunity to reaffirm to your excellency our deep pride in the unwavering stands of support adopted by the president, government, and people [of Iraq] toward the just struggle of our Palestinian people to end the Israeli occupation of their land and holy places and to restore and exercise their inalienable national rights, the foremost of which is their right to self- determination and to establish an independent Palestinian state with holy Jerusalem as its capital.

On this glorious occasion, I would like to praise the existing fraternal relations between our two countries and peoples. We always seek to upgrade and bolster these relations of fruitful cooperation to serve our common goals.

I reaffirm to your excellency my heartfelt congratulations coupled with our deep respect and appreciation for your esteemed person. I wish you continued good health and happiness and your fraternal people all that is good under your wise leadership. Together we will remain until, with God's assistance, we reach holy Jerusalem.

Iraq: Opposition Claims State Agencies Using Dollars

JN2807162196 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1215 GMT 28 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Our sources said in an economic report that, in state departments, the dollar has become an alternative currency for financial transactions. They said that the Finance Ministry has not confirmed this change in a law or instructions to all ministries. Our sources say that the political and economic state departments started using the dollar instead of the dinar in order to withdraw the foreign currencies from the Iraqi markets.

The authority has not admitted that it has no confidence in the national currency. Our sources added that the Finance Ministry is monopolizing trade in dollars, and merchants and companies that trade in dollars are being pursued. Our sources cited an expert as saying that continued use of the dollar will gravely harm the national currency. He said that it will also paralyze activity in the economic sector, which will not be able to find any foreign currencies for transactions with foreign exporters.

Israel: Netanyahu To Meet With 'Arafat After Mordekhay, Meridor

TA2907113596 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1000 GMT 29 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu will confer with Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasir 'Arafat after the latter meets with Defense Minister Yitzhaq Mordekhay and Finance Minister Dan Meridor. This was stated today by Eytan Bentzur, the Foreign Ministry's assistant director general.

Israel: Levi Says Israel Supports Pact Banning Nuclear Tests

TA2807142096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1300 GMT 28 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister David Levi informed his U.S. counterpart Warren Christopher that Israel supports the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. This has been reported by our political correspondent Shlomo Raz.

This morning Minister Levi met John Holum, director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. The U.S. official heard additional details about Israel's support for the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty — this on condition that the wording of the treaty not be changed.

Israel: 'Political Sources'—Israel Did Not Pledge To Sign NTBT

TA2907100296 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 29 Jul 96 p A3

[Report by Aluf Ben]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Yesterday, Israel notified the United States that it accepts the current draft of the international Nuclear Test Ban Treaty [NTBT] and will ask for no additional changes in it. Foreign Minister David Levi met in Jerusalem with John Holum, director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Authority, and handed him the text of the Israeli resolution. Itamar Rabinovich, Israel's ambassador to the United States, later presented the same message to Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott. [passage omitted]

The Israeli statement says: "In the spirit of Israel's commitment to ban all nuclear explosions, for arms tests or other purposes, Israel will not seek to reopen the text of the compromise draft of the NTBT for further negotiations — assuming it will not be opened by other participants of the Geneva disarmament conference. Israel decided to adopt this stand, despite the fact that the current draft does not appropriately answer some of its concerns." Levi also thanked the United States for its cooperation in the negotiations on the NTBT.

Political sources have stressed that Israel did not pledge to sign the NTBT and that the issue of signing it will be discussed only after its drafting is completed and presented for the various countries to sign. At that time, Israel will examine all the aspects pertaining to world regimes, including Arab countries, joining the arms control treaty.

Israel has already announced that it supports the principle of banning nuclear tests, but raised a series of demands for amendments of the NTBT, fearing the control and supervision apparatus might be abused. Among other things, Israel was worried about supervisory flights over the Dimona nuclear reactor, or demands by hostile elements to inspect sensitive installations under the claim that they are allegedly used for nuclear tests.

Last week, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu accepted a recommendation to adopt the U.S. stand, as presented to him by the professional echelons of the Foreign and Defense Ministries and the Israel Atomic Energy Commission [IAEC]. Holum came to Israel to receive the draft of the Israeli resolution.

Yesterday, Holum met Levi and IAEC Director Gid'on Frank, and will meet Defense Ministry Director General David 'Ivri today. The U.S. Administration decided to make the visit to Israel public, which it usually does not, apparently to demonstrate its success in obtaining an Israeli concession on the NTBT. [passage omitted]

Israel: Minister Qahalani Interviewed on Counterterrorism Efforts

TA2607184596 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 26 Jul 96

[Interview with Israeli Internal Security Minister Avigdor Qahalani by 'Imanu'el Rosen and Gadi Sukenik in the studio — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Sukenik] Internal Security Minister Avigdor Qahalani, six weeks after the previous terror attack occurred in the same area and by much the same method, I want to ask you what have the police and the security forces done on the ground?

[Qahalani] Since the previous attack, they have increased their alertness in the area. Generally, however, we cannot do much in this area unless our entire concept regarding the dividing line is changed — and this is what we should strive to accomplish. It is possible to add vehicles, step up security and guard duty....

[Sukenik, interrupting] Are you saying that under the present system, such an attack can recur tomorrow?

[Qahalani] The present system does not provide absolute security. I propose to adopt a new system. The settlements themselves must understand that they must tighten their internal security and step up the volunteer activity in order to protect themselves.

[Rosen] In today's cabinet session, the prime minister said he has ordered the security forces to use special new means to locate this squad. Are there any means with which we are not familiar?

[Qahalani] If the prime minister gave an order, let's wait and see what happens. We will probably resort to new methods. I believe, however, that his remarks refer mainly to the intelligence and military spheres. His remarks imply that we should use all the means at our disposal....

[Rosen, interrupting] This, however, has always been done in the past.

[Qahalani] True. What he said, however, points to the introduction of additional means, funds, etc.

[Sukenik] It seems as though his remarks regarding the special means were devoid of real content.

[Qahalani] Are you trying to make me the prime minister's commentator? I will translate his remarks into reality in the sphere under my responsibility.

[Sukenik] This government promised peace with security. What is it doing or does it plan to do that has not been done by the previous government? The issue of the dividing line, as well as the other issues we have mentioned, were already discussed by the previous government.

[Qahalani] Look, once we decided that we accept and plan to proceed with the Oslo accords — and we have already shaken 'Arafat's hand — we are undoubtedly proceeding on a more or less similar road to that taken by the previous government. We can pose conditions regarding certain activities, but I believe that this government will continue the peace process while setting its own restrictions. It is possible that on the issues of the final border, the Jordan Valley, Ari'el, the 'Etzyon Bloc, and similar places, this government will show more firmness in order to prevent any harm coming to them. [passage omitted]

Israel: Netanyahu Foresees U.S.-Led Antiterrorism Campaign

TA2907090196 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 29 Jul 96 p 5

[Report by Hemi Shalev]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu said last night he is convinced the United States recognizes the dangers of international terror and will soon lead an international campaign to fight the phenomenon. Netanyahu proposed to the United States to adopt "various measures" to rapidly overcome the domestic terror afflicting it.

"International terror is the most menacing," Netanyahu told MA'ARIV last night, "and it will continue to grow if actions are not taken against elements engaging in terror, primarily countries and terrorist bodies in the Middle East. I am convinced that this is clear to Washington, and that the United States will muster international support to carry out these actions."

Netanyahu added that the terror striking the United States comes from two sources: international terror and "movements and bodies in America." According to him, the United States "can overcome domestic terror by adopting various measures, just as the West European countries overcame it." [passage omitted]

Israel: General Closure on Territories Lifted

TA2907051996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0400 GMT 29 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The general closure that had been imposed on Judaea and Samaria following the terror attack on the Munk family near Bet Shemesh [on 25 July] was lifted this morning. Thus, all the measures to ease the closure announced 10 days ago have gone into effect.

Israel: Official on Plans To Build 'Massively' Beyond Green Line

TA2907090696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0700 GMT 29 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Nehama Ronen, director general of the Environment Ministry, says that there is not enough room for massive construction of detached houses in the center of the country, and that therefore there is no choice but to build massively beyond the Green Line. Mrs. Ronen emphasizes that the foremost intention is to flesh out existing settlements, and in her opinion, this ought in no way to impair the peace process. She told our correspondent Shulamit Schmerling that she represents her ministry's position and the position of the committee of ministerial directors reviewing construction policy.

Israel: West Bank Towns Reopen to Israeli Traffic

TA2907091896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 29 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] reopened Qalqilyah and the town of al-Zahiriyah in the Hebron area to Israeli traffic this morning. Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem points out that the two locations were declared closed military zones after incidents in which Palestinian policemen opened fire at Israeli vehicles.

Major General Gabi Ofir, commander of IDF troops in Judaea and Samaria, conferred last night with top Palestinian Police officers and informed them that the IDF would harden its policy if they continue to violate the agreements with Israel.

Israel: National Development Plan Revision Favors Settler Rights

TA2807161896 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1400 GMT 28 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The government plans to restore some of the financial benefits to the settlers that were taken away from them during the tenure of the Labor government. This was announced today by Avigdor Lieberman, director general of the Prime Minister's Office. Lieberman says the present government will stop the discrimination against Jews in Judaea and Samaria. In a news conference this evening, Lieberman said that the present national development plan will be changed to accommodate the Likud's world view. Our correspondent Shlomi Stein reports:

[Begin recording] [Stein] The director general of the Prime Minister's Office mustered the directors general of the various ministries today. The directors general decided to recommend to their ministers to change the national development plan, which has been the basis for construction in Israel over the last 10 years. Avigdor Lieberman says that the new plan will reflect the world view of the new government — that is, it will take Judaea and Samaria into consideration. The Jewish settlers in the territories can breathe a sigh of relief: In addition to resuming construction activity in the territories there is also a plan to reinstate financial rights and benefits for the settlers — such as the tax benefits canceled by the Labor government.

[Lieberman] The classification of areas in Judaea and Samaria was done on a purely political basis. We will address the relevant aspects of the issue. For example, we cannot ignore the fact that the road to Ari'el is still dangerous. Generally speaking, we are not a government that will discriminate against settlers in Judaea and Samaria.

[Stein] The directors general committee also decided to grant four northern Arab settlements the status of confrontation-line settlements. One of the four is al-Ghajar on the Golan Heights. Perhaps this is a signal to somebody in Damascus. [end recording]

Israel: Sharon Orders 2 New Roads in Territories

TA2907055396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0500 GMT 29 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] National Infrastructure Minister Ari'el Sharon has ordered the Public Works Department to start paving a new access road to Jerusalem from the north and a new trans-Samaria road. Both roads will cost 170 million shekels.

Our correspondent Gil Litman has learned that the new four-lane access road to Jerusalem will start from 'Atarot Airport. It will mostly run through Area B and will be 10 km long.

The director of the Public Works Department said the new trans- Samaria road had been planned during Minister Sharon's previous tenure in the government, but work on it was halted by the Rabin government.

Binyamin Ben-Eli'ezer, the former construction minister, says that a new trans-Samaria road will consume a lot of money needed to pave more vital roads in central Israel. As for the new access road to Jerusalem, Ben-Eli'ezer says this is an indispensable road which was included in the previous government's plans.

Peace Now says that Minister Sharon's plan to build two big roads in the territories and the political declarations of Avigdor Lieberman, director general of the Prime Minister's Office, expose the new government's intentions: to destroy the peace process.

Israel: IDF To Take 'Tougher Action' Against Palestinian Violations

TA2807084496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 28 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The head of the IDF's [Israel Defense Forces] Central Command has decided to take tougher action against any violations of the agreement by the Palestinian Police. Central Command sources said that any infringement of the agreement will lead to steps being taken against the Palestinians.

Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem notes that the town of al- Zahiriyah and the city of Qalqilyah were declared closed military zones after local Palestinian policemen fired at Israeli vehicles. The commander of the IDF in Judaea and Samaria will meet with the heads of the Palestinian Police this evening and discuss the violations of the agreement.

Israel: Palestinian Police Fire Shots at Israelis; No Injuries

TA2807144196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1200 GMT 28 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Palestinian policemen fired shots at an Israeli Border Police jeep in Ramallah. There were no injuries, but the jeep was damaged by the bullets. Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that during the incident Palestinian policemen manning a roadblock fired at a Border Police jeep driving on Ramallah's main road. Major General Gabi Ofir, commander of the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] forces in Judaea and Samaria, came to the scene and held a debriefing.

Palestinian Police sources claim the shots were fired by mistake, adding that the Palestinian policemen fired the shots in the air. Maj. Gen. Ofir demanded that the heads of the Palestinian Police restrain their forces. Maj. Gen. Ofir will meet the heads of the Palestinian Police this evening to discuss the violations of the agreement by the Palestinian policemen.

Israel: Number of Fatalities in 26 Jul Attack Rises to 3

TA2807083096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 28 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Ze'ev Munk died of his injuries today at the Sheba Medical Center. He was wounded in the terrorist attack near Moshav Tirosh on 26 July. His father, Uri, will be buried this afternoon in Mevo Betar. Ze'ev Munk's wife, Rahel, was buried yesterday.

Israel: Government 'Regrets' Clinton Decision on Pollard

TA2707111596 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0800 GMT 27 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Reacting to President Clinton's decision to reject all petitions to free Jonathan Pollard or reduce his sentence, the prime minister's bureau has announced that the Israeli Government regrets the decision. Our political correspondent Udi Segal reports that the prime minister, who conveyed an appeal for Pollard's release earlier this week, will continue to act to this end.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0800 GMT on 27 July adds: "The spokesman for the Israeli Embassy in Washington has expressed the embassy's regret over President Clinton's decision to reject all petitions to pardon Jonathan Pollard. An embassy announcement states that it, together with the Jewish community, will continue to assist Jonathan Pollard and his family as much as possible. President Clinton's decision was communicated to Ambassador Itamar Rabinovich and was officially announced in Washington last night.

["Our correspondent Hayim Zissowitz reports that several Jewish organizations have issued statements voicing disappointment with President Clinton's decision."]

Israel: Foreign Ministry Appointments Approved

TA2907102396 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 29 Jul 96 p A3

[Report by Aluf Ben]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Foreign Ministry's Supreme Appointments Committee held its first session under Foreign Minister David Levi yesterday, and approved a series of appointments to ambassadorial positions and representations abroad, as well as the ministry's heads of departments in Jerusalem.

The committee approved the appointment of Eliyahu Ben-Elisar as ambassador to the United States; Tzvi Maz'el, who has been serving as deputy director general for African affairs, as ambassador to Belgium; Gad Natan as ambassador to Myanmar; Rafi Valdan as ambassador to Eritrea; Gabi Azulay as charge of the interest office in Mauritania; and Shmu'el Rav'el as commercial representative to Qatar.

Tova Herzl was appointed head of the East Europe 1 Department, replacing Meron Gordon, who died several months ago, and Yosi 'Amihud was appointed head of ceremonies.

Israel: Commentary Criticizes Peres, Opposition for 'Arafat Support

TA2907163996 (Internet) Women in Green Information Service in English 29 Jul 96

[Commentary: "The Disloyal Opposition"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Our Government policy towards 'Arafat, who has a track record of murdering Jews with impunity, as well as a history of calculated indifference to the murder of Jews, should not be determined by the disloyal opposition here in Israel. The sad breaking news of the most recent murders of Uri, Ze'ev, and his newly wedded wife Rachel, Munk by Arabs, is still another glaring example of the failure of 'Arafat to control violent attacks on Jews. It really does not matter which of the various factions of his PLO, or organizations he works with such as Hamas, committed this heinous crime. The disloyal opposition of course in effect blamed the event not on 'Arafat, but on the new Government's failure to follow faithfully the Peres "peace process" approach. It's as if the elections did not explicitly reject the Peres way to "peace".

Peres repeatedly shows himself to be a small, disloyal and vain man. He seems to be more interested in trying to show he was "right", than in joining in the necessary condemnation of the failure of 'Arafat and the PLO to do what is necessary to bring about a complete halt to such terror attacks. By not placing the blame on such terror incidents at the proper address of 'Arafat, he aids and abets the continued charade of a "peace process" that does not bring peace. Peres continues his old failed policies despite the mounting evidence that 'Arafat has not changed his murderous and hate-inducing ways, and does not intend to. Just the other day, and as an example of his adherence to the principles of peace, 'Arafat delivered a fiery address in Gaza stirring up his supporters against Israel. Once again he extolled 'Ayyash, a mass murderer of Jews, as a martyr and hero. Predictably this speech was ignored by Peres and his followers.

The fact that 'Arafat, after Oslo, pronounced to Arab diplomats in Sweden that he cannot abide Jews, and aims to destroy Israel, is also completely disregarded; so, typically, are the undeniable facts of basic flaws in Arafat's deceitful character. There is also lacking in the attacks of Peres' camp, any mention of its devotion to this Jewish State, the Jewish People, or a belief in the Jews historic rights to this Promised Land. Peres, and those around him, come across as small minded, petty, narrow politicians; they are unable to identify with the miracle of the Jews return to Zion and rebuilding their Jewish State, after 2,000 years of living in exile.

Peres continues to look away from the fact that in the areas under 'Arafat and PLO control, the educational system preaches hatred of Israel and the Jews, despite Oslo. There is no propaganda for Arab-Jewish peaceful co-existence. Instead in these key areas of education and mass communication, 'Arafat shows his actual mettle and true deleterious intentions.

With such an attitude of 'Arafat, Labor and Meretz, and despite the fact that they have the unwavering support of a left-oriented and anti-Zionistic media, Netanyahu, with his decisive majority of Jewish supporters, should be assured of a long stay in office.

Israel: Commentary Views Settlements, Peace Process

TA2907122896 (Internet) IMRA News Service in English 28 Jul 96

[Commentary by Dr. Aaron Lerner, IMRA associate: "Settlements — Catalyst for Peace"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] "Israeli settlement activity is an impediment to peace." For years the Arabs, American officials, and the Israeli Left have claimed that the continuing Israeli settlement activity hurts the peace process. If anything, settlement activity acts as a catalyst to press the Palestinians to move forward in the peace process.

Israeli settlement activity is the only action from the Israeli side which threatens the Palestinians with the prospect that the deal they may refuse today may be considerably better than the deal that Israel will be able or willing to offer tomorrow. Even if the negotiations are bogged down due to Palestinian intransigence and Israeli redeployments are postponed, all of this is temporary in nature. A short blip in the century old Arab-Israeli conflict. But settlement activity is quite another story. Growing settlements define areas which the Israeli national consensus will never support returning. Settlements stretching on key roads turn the tables on future possible solutions, ending the isolation of Israeli settlements and, in turn, isolating Arab villages.

Is Israeli settlement activity a violation of the Oslo Agreements? Palestinian complaints about settlement activity cite Article XXXI Paragraph 7 of the Interim Agreement: "Neither side shall initiate or take any step that will change the status of the West Bank and Gaza Strip pending the outcome of the permanent status negotiations."

The meaning of "status" means "legal status". A violation of the agreement would take place if Israel annexed part of the West Bank or Gaza Strip or the PA [Palestinian Autonomy] declared an independent state in the area before the negotiations were concluded. Israeli settlement activity is no more a violation of the Agreement than Palestinian construction. Many Palestinian officials recognize this and instead argue that the settlements are not "in the spirit of Oslo". But the agreements are legal documents, and as legal documents what counts is what is written — not some amorphous "spirit".

Besides encouraging the Palestinians to lower their demands and expectations, settlement activity, if properly packaged, can be used as a prime tool in the battle against terror. Historically, settlements were considered the "Zionist response to terror." A look at the map of modern Israel finds it sprinkled with the names of settlements named in memory of the victims of various Arab attacks. Today's terrorists are popular folk heroes in Palestinian society. The cost to the Palestinians of terror, in the form of restrictions on movement and commerce, may be painful, but the pain is temporary in nature. Large terrorist attacks may postpone Israeli redeployments and talks, but, again, these are temporary setbacks.

Terrorist attacks may, in fact, be viewed in the long run by the Palestinians as serving their interests by softening

Israel's resolve. When one well known Israeli Leftist declared in an interview on Israel Radio after the bus bombings in Jerusalem that "we celebrated the day that the wall dividing Jerusalem was torn down in 1967 and we will celebrate the day it is erected again" this was not lost on the Palestinians.

But what if the Netanyahu Administration returns to the "Zionist response to terror"? Sure, the Palestinians won't be pleased to learn that the "Munk neighborhood" is being built in the memory of the Munk family recently murdered in a drive-by shooting. But will the murderers still be the same heroes they were before their action lead to the building of yet more Jewish homes?

The "Zionist response to terror" has another benefit. Besides deterring Arab terror, it would serve to bolster the morale of the Israeli public by offering it a positive emotional outlet through which to respond to Arab terror. By establishing living memorials, Israel would be effectively saying: "We are on the map. Terror will not vanquish."

It is said that the Arabs decided to make peace with Israel when they came to the conclusion that they could not destroy the Jewish State on the battlefield. By the same token, settlement activity today may very well convince the Palestinians that they must compromise now or face the prospects of a considerably worse deal in the future.

Israel: Netanyahu Performance Since Elections Viewed

TA2907150896 (Internet) Shomron News Service in English 29 Jul 96

["Special Report" SR015: "Report Card"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

The National Elections

Following the May 29th National Elections, and the handing over of the government to the Netanyahu-led government, SNS has decided to evaluate the government's performance, based on its campaign promises and Likud Party platform.

Prime Minister Netanyahu was successful in an unexpected victory (based on all pre-election polls). He also enjoys the confidence of knowing he was the first Prime Minister of Israel to be directly elected by the people.

The Agreements

Prior to the National Elections, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu signed coalition agreements with the Gesher Party, Headed by Foreign Minister David Levi, and the Tzomet Party, Headed by Agriculture and Environmental Affairs Minister, Refa'el Eytan.

Eytan was perceived as the logical choice for Internal Security Minister, or a more "senior" post. Following the elections, he was the subject of an investigation conducted by the State Attorney General's Office. He was mentioned in connection with two criminal cases. 1) The disclosure of a classified IDF [Israel Defense Forces] document. 2) Illegal campaign donations accepted by the Tzomet Party in the 1992 National Elections. These pending cases eliminated him from a more senior position. Most outsiders credit Minister of National Infrastructure, Ari'el Sharon, with the election victory and the signing of Likud's two coalition partners.

Today's coalition is made up of Likud-Tzomet-Gesher, National Religious Party (NRP), United Torah Judaism Party (UTJ), Third Way Party, SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim] Party, and Yisra'el Ba'aliya Party.

The Platform

Despite the Likud Party's Right-Wing platform and election campaign promises, made by the Prime Minister regarding Jerusalem, Hevron, administrative detentions, Jewish prayer on the Temple Mount, and the Oslo Accords, the government's actions over the first 60-days since the elections, have left many Right-Wing supporters skeptical about fulfillment of these promises.

Some of the coalition partners are "less-than-supportive" regarding a Jewish hold on Hebron, and other promises made that may create controversy regarding the continuation of the peace process with the PLO and other Arab neighbors.

The Post Election Realities

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The Budget

Finance Minister Meridor has announced that the nation will have to "tighten its belt" for many one-time cuts being implemented, in order to get the nation's economy back on track. Mr. Netanyahu, who holds a Masters Degree in Economics, stated that his austerity plan is the only solution and will bring the country to a position of financial independence and will ultimately prove to have been the correct path.

Many have been critical of the budget cuts, which fall heavily on the middle-income and poorer elements of Israeli society. In addition, the government saw nothing wrong with simultaneously announcing a 33% increase for all MKs [Knesset members], an additional Parliamentary Assistant for each MK, and an increased operating budget.

Included in the new Budget cuts are: A 13% increase in public transportation, effective in September; A cut in discharge benefits afforded to IDF soldiers; Increased costs for visits to the doctor; Increased cost in monthly National Health tax; Decreased monthly allocations for child allotment payments; A 25% increase in the cost of pharmaceuticals; Increase in the cost of school tuition; A cut of 70,000 school hours, effective the 1996-1997 school year; Thousands of layoffs of government workers; Sharp increase in the cost of water for agricultural use.

Adding to this is the ordering of ten new Cadillacs for government Ministers. (Although the order was placed by the previous Peres Labor Party government, the GM representative in Israel stated it was still in the first stages).

This last measure that seems to contradict the austerity plan, is the government's move to adopt the Norwegian Law, permitting an additional 12 MKs to be sworn in and thereby adding an estimated NIS [new Israeli shekels] 100 million to the government's price tag, over the next four years.

Hebron

Prior to his election, Prime Minister Netanyahu proclaimed that Hebron will remain in Jewish hands, forever. Spokespersons of the Hebron Jewish Community were very optimistic following the Likud election victory.

Now, some 60-days later, the optimism has turned into cautious support for the Right-wing government. Third Way Party Minister of Internal Security, Avigdor Qahalani, a retired IDF General, has made it perfectly clear, that he and his party expect the government to honor all agreements signed by former Prime Minister Peres, including the IDF redeployment from Hebron. Qahalani, elected on his platform for saving the Golan Heights, was very clear that he would not support any move to renege on the Israeli pullout from Hebron.

Yasir 'Arafat and the PLO continue to grow impatient regarding Hebron. Political analysts believe Hebron will be the government's first test case, regarding the resumption or the continuation of the ongoing peace process with the PLO.

Minister Qahalani has stated the government will not abandon the Jewish Community and the Jewish Holy Sites. Following recommendations by MKs such as Hanan Porat, of the NRP [National Religious Party], it now appears the new Netanyahu plan calls for a free passage to and from all Jewish areas and Holy Sites. This would include, the Avraham Aveinu neighborhood, Bayt Hadassah, Tel Rumeida, Cave of the Patriarchs, and the Old Jewish Cemetery. It appears that the remainder of Hebron will be handed over to the PLO, despite objections of the Jewish Community of Hebron. An unspecified security wall will be built around the Jewish residents, to protect them. This wall is already being described by many local residents, as a modern day ghetto and is deemed unacceptable.

On July 23, 1996, No'am Arnon, the Spokesman for the Hebron Jewish Community, made the following statement: "The shake-up of 1996 never was and never will be. The representatives of the Likud government have met with the 'murderer of murderers', Yasir 'Arafat. The anti-democratic policies of the former Left-Wing government are still in practice. The "100-days of Mercy," being granted the Likud government, are coming to an end. Then, we will fight the Likud government, just as we did the former Left-Wing Labor government."

Peace Accords

Prime Minister Netanyahu made a most favorable impression during his addresses in Washington. He appeared to have succeeded in changing his pre-election image of being a "Hawk," who opposes the continuation of the peace process. He appears to have convinced the American government that he too, wants a continuation of peace process and he is more of a centrist.

The Arab League looked at his American visit as a most unfavorable experience and many leaders termed his address a "Declaration of War." One senior PLO leader stated, "He must realize that he must make peace with us, and not with the United States."

Mr. Netanyahu has reiterated the policy of his government, to move ahead with the peace process and to honor all previously signed accords. He does state that the "other parties" must also comply with the peace accords and he has presented a list of violations to Yasir 'Arafat via his representatives. The Prime Minister stated his desire to move ahead on the Syrian front as well, without any preconditions.

Mr. 'Arafat in return, has prepared his own list of Israeli violations. He also stated, that Netanyahu not having met with him face-to-face was a bad sign.

Following his visit with Egyptian President Husni Mubarak, the Egyptian leader stated he now understands Mr. Netanyahu's position and is "relaxed."

The government appears to be taking a harder line vis-a-vis the continued operation of the PLO-controlled East Jerusalem Orient House. Despite the continued PLO activities at the East Jerusalem PLO Headquarters, the previous government "turned its head" to avoid a confrontation, something that this government may not do. It has threatened to shut down the building, should the activities continue. PLO Minister of Jerusalem Affairs, Faysal al-Husayni seems less-than-worried regarding Israeli threats.

On July 23rd, Yasir 'Arafat assured Foreign Minister David Levi that all "illegal" activities in the Orient House will be immediately halted. 'Arafat gave his personal guarantee.

Administrative Detentions

This may be the one area in which the Prime Minister has most disappointed his Right-Wing followers.

Since his election, almost all administrative orders that have expired, have been renewed. Many Ministers in the government who spearheaded the attacks against former Prime Minister Shim'on Peres and his "anti-democratic" actions, now are part of a government that does the same. Right-Wing activists are calling the government's continued use of administrative detention, "hypocritical and anti-democratic." On the other hand, the outcry that was heard against the previous government has been diminished. Many Right-Wing supporters cannot bring themselves to condemn "their" government and choose to remain silent. The Left-Wing and "Human Rights Camp" remain silent, as well, regarding the incarceration of Jewish administrative detainees, despite their ongoing outcry to free Arab detainees.

It was believed that with Prime Minister Netanyahu's western background and his years of living in the United States, he would have favored the abolishment of these archaic anti- democratic British Mandate laws. This theory has fallen by the wayside.

Another member of government, Science Minister Dr. Binyamin Ze'ev Begin, the son of the late Prime Minister Menahem Begin, has also explained, how in certain cases, the administrative detentions are necessary to protect the democratic fiber of our society. It was the late Menahem Begin, who was the first Israeli leader to institute the practice of using administrative detention orders against Jewish citizens of Israel. He incarcerated the late Rabbi Me'ir Kahana and Mr. Baruch Ben-Yosef, now a Jerusalem attorney.

Moledet MK, Rabbi Beni Elon and Likud MK Moshe Peled have voiced their opposition to the use of such practices against Israeli citizens. Amnesty International continues its condemnations against Israel for the continued use of administrative detentions against Arab citizens and residents of Judaea, Samaria and Gaza.

For now, Har Brakha resident and Israeli citizen, Sammy Ovadya remains in solitary confinement with all privileges revoked. He was incarcerated for a three-month term, following an administrative order that was issued by OC Central Command, Maj.-Gen. Uzi Dayan.

His sentence ends on August 19th. His wife Pauline, an American citizen, does not even know why he was dragged from his home. She has stated publicly, that Sammy has never committed or been charged with any crime. He is just a citizen who "endangers the public welfare," according to the agents of the General Security Service.

Temple Mount

Temple Mount activists are waiting to see if the Prime Minister will make good on his promises to permit Jewish prayer on this Holy Site. In a letter released by Hay Veqayam activist Yehuda 'Etzyon, written by the Prime Minister while he was an opposition party member, Mr. Netanyahu states he is for Jewish prayer on the Mount.

In his coalition talks with the National Religious Party, the issue of the Temple Mount was actually included in the government's operating guidelines. At the last minute, it was changed to read "Holy Sites," in order to minimize opposition from Arab and Left- wing MKs. Many Temple Mount activists have decided to give the new government a time period in which to change, what has been the status quo since the 1967 Six Day War.

Following the Israeli defeat of the Arab armies, the government decided to maintain control of the Temple Mount but turned over day- to-day operations to the Moslem Waqf. This has enraged many Jews, who feel that only Israel may control the Holiest Site of the Jewish Nation.

To date, there have been many Supreme Court decisions that permit Jewish prayer on the Mount. The Jerusalem Police have always barred the potential worshipers, stating their presence would enrage the Moslem community and cause rioting, thereby bypassing the High Court rulings.

For now, a Jew wishing to go up to the Mount, may only do so escorted by Israeli Police and members of the Moslem Waqf. They may not utter any prayer, wear a prayer shawl, or any other external religious articles.

Even following the Arab attack from the Temple Mount some six years ago, the Mount remains in the Waqf control. Thousands of Arabs threw stones at Jewish worshipers below, at the Western Wall. Police shot and killed 17 Arab rioters on the Mount.

Mikha'el Ben-Ya'ir

State Attorney General Mikha'el Ben-Ya'ir was one of the senior government officials, who was certain to be replaced with the formation of the new Likud government. That he was not replaced, was a shock to Likud constituents.

Ben-Ya'ir has been very open and above-board, in regard to his double standards in dealing with Israeli citizens and those he terms, "settlers." On more than one occasion, Ben-Ya'ir was quoted as saying, "settlers do not enjoy the same rights as do citizens of Israel. They do not have the same Freedom of Speech or other basic rights enjoyed by citizens living inside the Green Line (referring to residents of what is also called "Israel proper").

When the rumors of Ben-Ya'ir's imminent replacement began to circulate, Left-Wing MKs immediately created a public outcry and accused Mr. Netanyahu of lowering the State Attorney Generals position to a political appointee. The Left-Wing explained that Ben-Ya'ir was above political agendas and he should not be automatically replaced, based on the new Right-Wing government's policy changes. The Prime Minister backed down.

Since then, the Attorney General continues to undermine governmental Ministers and has been working actively to bring criminal cases against many of the Ministers of the current government, including his own boss, Minister of Justice Ya'aqov Ne'eman.

Media

Following the appointment of Communications Minister Limor Livnat, it was assumed that the obviously anti-religious and Left-Wing-controlled government television and radio would see a revival.

To date, no apparent change was made. It was expected that the Israel Broadcasting Corporation Director- General, Moti Kirshenbaum, would be among the first to be removed from his position.

Kirshenbaum was the subject of many Likud attacks when they were in the opposition. His obvious bias towards the Left-wing was reflected by the programming on national government-controlled television and radio.

Channel 7 Radio Host Adir Ziq, who gained national fame with his "Adir's Fireworks" program, which attacked the policies of the late Yitzhaq Rabin and his Labor Party, was the obvious candidate for the job. Ziq, who was trained in the United States and holds a Masters Degree in Broadcasting still waits for the appointment. For now, the government-controlled media continues to operate with its usual biases, as has been the case prior to the elections.

Bar Ilan

The issue of the Sabbath closing of Bar Ilan Street promises to become one of national importance. The growing pro and con support for the issue is apparent every week, as the size and intensity of the demonstrations grow.

The Orthodox residents of Jerusalem expected a more sympathetic attitude to their constant battle to shut down Bar Ilan Street on the Sabbath.

Bar Ilan, a major thoroughfare, runs through an Orthodox neighborhood. The Sturm Committee, a public committee composed of Jews from all walks of life, was given the task of investigating the feasibility of implementing the shutdown request.

The Committee submitted its findings, one of compromise. Bar Ilan was to be shut down to vehicular traffic during the hours in which prayer services were being held. Despite the authority given the Committee, the plan could never be implemented during the reign of the former Labor-led government. The anti-religious Transportation Minister refused to entertain such an action.

Now, following the elections and the approximately 95% support given to Mr. Netanyahu from Israel's Orthodox Community, it was expected that the Committee's request would be implemented. The Supreme Court, together with Left-Wing activists have barred this shut down for now. Orthodox Jews vow to close down the street. Each Saturday, the demonstrations seem to become increasingly larger. Many critics have condemned police, who they claim are being extremely brutal and are indiscriminately using water cannon against unarmed demonstrators.

On the other hand, police allege that the number of stone attacks against them by demonstrators and shouts of "nazi" are also on the rise.

Note: Our research has shown that the use of water cannon has been barred from Western Countries. It has shown to be an effective means of crowd control, but also is responsible for injuring many innocent persons and has been documented to have caused very serious injuries, due to the very high-pressure stream of water used. According to experts in the USA, it is not considered an acceptable means of crowd control.

Settlements

Perhaps this is Mr. Netanyahu's biggest challenge. Elected by his constituents, who for the most part believe in a "Greater Land of Israel," which entails the continued growth of the Jewish Communities located throughout Judaea, Samaria and Gaza, also known more commonly as "The Settlements."

Mr. Netanyahu and his Likud Party favor the existence and continued growth of these communities. The Prime Minister stated that he would head a government whose policies were conducive to the further growth of these Jewish communities.

On the other hand, the White House, the PLO, and all Arab nations are adamantly opposed to funding or tolerating the growth of the Jewish Communities located in the areas known by the world as "The West Bank [of the Jordan River]."

On July 23rd, Mr. Netanyahu stated once again, that he intends to fill all homes that were partially built and then left to stand idle by the former Labor-led government. In addition, the Prime Minister stated the completion of all bypass roads was a high priority for his government. A comprehensive plan for the communities in Judaea, Samaria and Gaza would be ready shortly, promises the Prime Minister.

In the initial stages, Mr. Netanyahu states that he will work towards enlarging existing communities and new communities are not being entertained at this time. The US and the PLO will be formidable opponents to this plan. This was one of the items over which the PLO has stated, on more than one occasion, that it would break off the ongoing peace negotiations. The PLO looks at the settlements as a hindrance and it is unlikely they will tolerate the further development of the communities in question.

The Palestinian Committee for Land and Water has already made its declaration of war, as has Peace Now. Both have stated they will renew efforts to block the expansion of settlements, even if they must do so with their bodies. The Arabs have already engaged residents of Shilo (Shomron-Binyamin Regional Council) on Friday, July 19th, and the situation became violent. IDF troops moved in. Several Arabs and Jews were injured.

At present, another 3,500 units have been announced for the Gush 'Etzyon community of Efrat. These homes will be built on the hills of Zayt, Dagan and Tamar. Local Arabs from al-Hadar were very active in blocking the building on these hills, about one year ago. At that time, they received the backing of the Left-Wing government. Today, the reaction is yet uncertain. On July 27th, the Director-General of the Prime Minister's Office, Avigdor Lieberman, announced the government will take steps to raise the standard of living of the settlers (Jewish residents of communities in Judaea, Samaria and Gaza). Lieberman would not elaborate at this time, but he explained that the government would implement plans to provide jobs and other measures to undo the policy of the former Labor-led government, that was aimed at "drying out" the settler communities.

It was also pointed out that Arab villages in Judaea, Samaria and Gaza would also be receiving assistance. "Everything the Jewish settlements receive, they'll receive," stated Lieberman.

The Prime Minister has emphasized that the expansion of the present Jewish communities throughout Judaea, Samaria and Gaza, will begin in the near future. He has also spoken publicly of his plans to build new homes along the new bypass roads. Today, the Prime Minister is meeting with the representatives of the Yesha' [Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza] Council.

It is expected that the Yesha Council Heads will ask for an official change in status, which includes the removal of all prohibitions implemented by the late Prime Minister Rabin and Mr. Peres. The ban on moving mobile homes, opening government owned homes, and other prohibitions are still in effect from the previous government.

In Conclusion

The new government seems to be "between a rock and a hard place". On the one hand, it was elected, based on its campaign promises of: Expanding the Jewish Communities in Judaea, Samaria and Gaza; Maintaining Jewish sovereignty over Hebron; Never dividing Jerusalem; Eliminating administrative detentions; Permitting Jewish prayer on the Temple Mount and more.

Many citizens who voted for Mr. Netanyahu and his coalition have already expressed their disappointment, as the government seems to have adopted many of the policies and practices of the previous left-of-center Labor government.

On the other side of the political coin, the previous Labor government MKs are critical and wary of the new government. They still view Mr. Netanyahu as a "Hawk" and are fearful of a breakdown of, what they believed was, the road to peace. Many opponents of

Mr. Netanyahu explain that despite the government's statements of its intentions to move ahead with the peace process, this is an impossibility if the government also chooses to move ahead with its current policies of: Continued settlement expansions; Jewish prayer on the Temple Mount; An elimination of the "Land for Peace" concept in the talks with Syria; Israel's failure to redeploy from Hebron, as agreed upon by former Prime Minister Peres; Israel's attempts at shutting down the East Jerusalem Orient House.

It has been 60-days since the elections for the 14th Knesset. A short time has passed since the new government has taken office. No doubt the road to peace in the Middle East will be a long and difficult journey. For now, we observe with cautious optimism regarding campaign promises, the peace process, and the future of Israel, as we prepare for the 21st Century.

Lebanon: l-Hirawi Condemns Atlanta Bombing

NC2907110596 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1030 GMT 28 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Ilyas al-Hirawi has sent a cable to U.S. President Bill Clinton extending his condolences to the victims of the Atlanta bombing. He condemned such acts and stressed the need to punish the perpetrators.

Lebanon: Al-Hariri Briefs Al-Hirawi on Syria Talks, Assess New Offer

NC2807145396 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1400 GMT 28 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Ilyas al-Hirawi received Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri at the B'abda Palace today. Al-Hariri briefed President al-Hirawi on the results of his visit to Damascus. They also assessed the situation in light of the Israeli proposal "Lebanon first."

Lebanon: Arab League Chief Meets Leaders; Views Israeli Withdrawal

NC2607114496 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1030 GMT 26 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid today met with President Ilyas al-Hirawi, after meeting with Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri in his mansion in Quraytim. In a statement today commenting on reports on possible Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon, 'Abd-al-Majid reasserted that withdrawal from south Lebanon will be a legal step and an implementation of Security Council resolution 425. He said, however, that he rejects this proposal if the aim is to create a rift between Lebanon and Syria. [passage omitted]

Lebanon: Israeli Artillery Shells Outskirts of Town 27 Jul

NC2807054496 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0430 GMT 28 July 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The outskirts of Kafr Milki in Iqlim al-Tuffah were subjected to artillery shelling by Israeli enemy forces last night. Two shells fell near a public school without inflicting casualties. The enemy forces raked the hills of Iqlim al-Tuffah using machine guns.

Lebanon: Islamic Resistance Claims Attack on Israeli Patrol

NC2707083296 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0815 GMT 27 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic Resistance has announced that one of its groups this morning detonated an explosive device against a mechanized Israeli patrol in the Duhur al-'Ayshiyah area. A Merkava tank was destroyed and its occupants killed or wounded, according to the Resistance statement.

Lebanon: Hizballah Radio Reports Israelis Evacuate, Demolish Posts

NC2707071096 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0530 GMT 27 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Citizens arriving from the occupied strip say the Zionist occupation forces have abolished their military roadblock in the town of al-Tayyibah. The roadblock was evacuated and bulldozed. The forces also evacuated the Bi'r Kallab post, which was used as a military and intelligence center, and demolished it. Information has it that the Zionist forces evacuated two of their posts east of Sidon and bulldozed them.

Lebanon: Israeli Forces Fortify Positions in South

NC2907162996 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1530 GMT 29 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli occupation forces in the south have strengthened their positions in Tallat al-Jamus, Humayyid, and Shaqif al-Naml in Haddathah. They also set up a checkpoint on the Shwayya-Shab'a Highway; cars were searched and drivers were told not to use that road before 0600.

Lebanon: Commentary Advocates More Force To Win Israeli Withdrawal

NC2707100296 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0530 GMT 27 Jul 96

[From the "Spotlight On Events" program: "Lebanon First"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The new Zionist plan proposed by Binyamin Netanyahu regarding the situation in Lebanon is not new at all, but is part of a series of plans that belong to one category, which is to destroy the national unity—albeit one with many loopholes—that the country has achieved after much suffering. This is what local observers are saying about the Zionist proposal, which is known now by the title Lebanon First. So what does this proposal include?

In going over the snatches of information released by the Zionists, information that does not promote precise discussion of the proposal, we note that Netanyahu sees no opportunity for resuming the negotiations with Syria because of the complete dissimilarity in their stances regarding the Golan Heights. The right-wing [Israeli] Government is not prepared to discuss any withdrawal from the occupied Heights, while Damascus sees any negotiations as futile if Israel does not announce its readiness to withdraw its forces from the Golan.

Based on this point and to create a trap for the Syrian leadership, Netanyahu proposed withdrawal from the south, but only after disarming the Resistance and getting specific security arrangements and guarantees. Netanyahu indirectly suggests that the choice of withdrawal from the south and preceding or accompanying arrangements are up for negotiation, meaning the possibility of finding common ground. Aside from the principal position that rejects negotiations with the Zionist enemy, some observers see in this proposal a new trap being put up for Lebanon by the enemy leaders. Lebanon has been tricked before by similar Israeli proposals, when they conveyed their readiness to negotiate to implement an Israeli withdrawal. These sources say that the Likud's Israel is hard-pressed on world powers, particularly Europe, because Israel has put on the mantle of the hardliner and extremist while [Shim'on] Peres dressed Israel in the mantle of readiness for negotiations to achieve a regional settlement. Hence the proposal to withdraw from south Lebanon gives Netanyahu an opportunity to show himself in a new guise, especially since he, very surprisingly, agreed on the formation of the monitoring committee for the April Understanding and his submission [as heard] to Islamic Resistance conditions in the indirect negotiations to release the detaineess and the martyrs' remains. This kind of proposal will put Syria in a tight position. Damascus sees in the Zionist plan a desire to separate the Lebanese and Syrian tracks, which implies that Lebanon will enter the Zionist tunnel, exactly as 'Arafat and Jordan entered in the past. Damascus emphasizes that Israel must assert its readiness to withdraw from all the occupied territories, be they the Golan, Lebanon, or Palestine. What strengthens Damascus' position is the visit by Yasir 'Arafat to Syria this week. He came to complain that the Zionists have breached their agreement with him, which shows that the enemy leaders do not have a desire to comply with any agreement signed with any Arab party.

Informed sources say the attempt to put Damascus in a corner in Lebanon will not succeed, because most of the sides in Lebanon are aware of the Zionist plans. There is also the resistance, which acts as a basic barrier to stop any attempt at bargaining with the occupation forces to remove them.

The sources say the only way to remove the Zionist forces from Lebanon is through force, which proved successful in the past. The final success of using force is there for all to see. The sources conclude by saying that without the large losses inflicted on the Zionists in Lebanon, they would not even have thought of withdrawing from Lebanese territory.

Lebanon: Buwayz Says Israeli Withdrawal Offer Vague

NC2707164096 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1530 GMT 27 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz has stated that the current situation, despite its imperfections and errors, is still a historic opportunity to remedy what can be remedied, because politics is the art of the possible.

He called on the Lebanese to rise above the shallow considerations of social and personal relations that are often of less importance than national affairs. He stressed the need for the broadest possible participation by the Lebanese public in the upcoming parliamentary elections in order to choose representatives who can say no when necessary and adopt patriotic stands.

Minister Buwayz said he believes that the Election Law contravenes the al-Ta'if Agreement, and therefore it is perfectly proper to criticize it.

Buwayz today announced the names appearing on his Kasrawan electoral ticket.

Commenting on the Israeli offer of "Lebanon First," the foreign minister remarked that it is a vague offer, noting that Lebanon welcomes total withdrawal under UN Security Council Resolution 425. As for the implementation of Resolution 242, Buwayz declared that this is not possible except through an Arab-Israeli dialogue and Arab-Israeli negotiations.

Lebanon: Speaker Birri Comments on Israeli Withdrawal Offer

NC2807132996 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1300 GMT 28 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Chamber of Deputies Speaker Nabih Birri has urged all Lebanese to exercise their constitutional right to elect a new Chamber of Deputies. He said that boycotting the elections represents repudiation of a citizen's personal rights because it cancels his role as a participant.

Birri said that the current talk of a Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon is aimed at waging a cold war, circumventing Security Council Resolution 425, separating the Lebanese and Syrian tracks, thwarting the resistance by trying to depict the Likud as a lamb. At a ceremony in Ba'labakk, he said that Israel has two choices: Either continuation of the resistance or withdrawal from south Lebanon and unconditional implementation of Resolution 425.

Lebanon: Hizballah's Qasim Rejects Israel's 'Lebanon First' Offer

NC2807145296 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1300 GMT 28 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Hizballah Deputy Secretary General Shaykh Na'im Qasim has said that the Lebanon first proposal is a seditious plan aimed at avoiding the resistance's painful strikes that caused Shim'on Peres' defeat. At a ceremony in Jibshit today, he said that Hizballah rejects the proposal of Lebanon first because it entails segregation and isolation from Syria.

Lebanon: Shiite Leader Says Israeli Withdrawal Terms Unacceptable

NC2707144996 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1300 GMT 27 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Shaykh 'Abd-al-Amir Qabalan, deputy chairman of the Higher Islamic Shiite Council, today rejected the conditions set by Binyamin Netanyahu, head of the Israeli enemy government, for withdrawing his occupation forces from south Lebanon.

Qabalan, who was speaking in Nfaray village in the south, declared that the only thing that the Lebanese people can accept is the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 425 and the unconditional withdrawal of the Israeli occupation forces from the south and the western al-Biqa'.

He asserted that the destiny of Lebanon is linked to that of Syria and that Netanyahu's conditions are totally unacceptable because they seek to isolate Lebanon and Syria from each other and separate their two negotiating tracks.

Lebanon: Arab League Chief Wants War Crime Trials for Qana Incident

NC2707135296 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1300 GMT 27 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid has announced that the date of the Qana massacre was a day of Arab mourning. He called for an Arab and international media campaign to condemn Israel for this action and to put the responsible Israeli officials on trial as war criminals.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid made these remarks during a visit to the martyrs' graves in Qana today, where he recited the opening verses of the Koran and laid wreaths on the graves.

'Abd-al-Majid Salih, chairman of the National Committee for Commemorating the Qana Victims, presented the Arab League secretary general with a photo album of the massacre and delivered a speech welcoming him.

Lebanon: Israeli Pilot Arad Said Transferred From Iran to al-Biqa'

JN2607155096 Dubayy AL-BAYAN in Arabic 24 Jul 96 p 1

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Beirut—A source at an Islamic organization in al-Biqa' in Lebanon told AL-BAYAN that European security organs started transferring Israeli pilot Ron Arad from an Iranian area to al-Biqa' through Damascus two days ago. The source said that the Syrian authorities did not know about moving Arad outside Lebanon. However, they are now "actively supervising closing this dossier."

The source declined to reveal the party that is holding Arad. It added that the pilot, whom Israel demands be handed over, is held by a non-Lebanese fundamental Islamic group that has centers in al- Biqa'. The pilot was handed over earlier to this group in Beirut as part of a deal with a Beirut-based allied fundamental Lebanese party.

The source asserted that Arad's fate is predictable and that his release requires time and constant negotiations, in which the adversaries will try to secure the exchange of the largest number of prisoners and bodies.

Lebanon: Shiite Cleric Terms Israel's Plan 'Wicked'

NC2607162796 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1530 GMT 26 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Shaykh Muhammad Mahdi Shams-al-Din, chairman of the Higher Islamic Shiite Council, has reiterated his call for holding the parliamentary elections on their scheduled dates. He described Israel's Lebanon First plan as wicked because it presents matters from a new angle in order to separate Lebanon from Syria. He considered the plan a great aggression against the whole nation. He affirmed that Lebanon will not commit suicide by falling into the trap set by Israel.

Shams-al-Din's remarks were contained in his Friday sermon in which he praised Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad's initiative for marshalling Arab ranks.

Lebanon: Elections on Time Despite Israel's Peace Proposal

NC2607162996 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic
1530 GMT 26 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The parliamentary elections will be held on the scheduled dates, no matter what. This assertion was made by Interior Minister Michel al-Murr today in response to a wave of speculation that the elections may be postponed or obstructed because of Israel's peace proposal—known as the Lebanon First proposal—or because of the appeal submitted by 10 deputies to the Constitutional Council. [passage omitted]

Lebanon: Al-Hariri Leaves for Damascus for Consultations

NC2707131996 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic
1300 GMT 27 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri left Beirut for Damascus this afternoon to consult with senior Syrian officials about regional developments. He is due to return to Beirut this evening.

Syria: Netanyahu's 'Lebanon First' Proposal Criticized

JN2807155996 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1138 GMT 28 Jul 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] After his talks with the Israeli prime minister and foreign minister, Dennis Ross, U.S. coordinator of the peace process in the region, ruled out the possibility of resuming the suspended peace talks on the Syrian track. Ross declared that the gap between the Syrian and Israeli positions is wide and that bridging this gap will require huge and intensive efforts. Ross' statements have been marked by profound skepticism, contrary to his previous statements when the Labor Party government was in office.

In his pre- and postelection statements, Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu did not conceal Israel's resolve to keep the occupied Syrian Golan under the pretext of security. In fact, despite his recent maneuvers, Netanyahu offered nothing tangible to advance the peace process on the Syrian, Lebanese, or Palestinian tracks. He publicly declared his determination to devour Jerusalem and destroy any Palestinian presence there. He deemed the West Bank part of the alleged land of Israel and that the Jews have the right to colonize any part of it. In this context, the Israeli Government announced plans to expand the existing settlements in the West Bank. Meanwhile, the Zionist settlers drew up a plan to set up new settlements. This means that the Palestinian have no choice but to leave their homes and property and join the hundreds of thousands of refugees who are suffering slow death as a result of unemployment, siege, and starvation.

Meanwhile, the Israel prime minister invented the Lebanon First concept in response to the growing Arab and international condemnation and the Arabs' agreement at the Cairo summit to confront Israel's hostile, expansionist schemes and to hold it responsible for the setback in the peace process. This concept was also in response to the international denunciation by the EU summit in Florence and the G-7 summit in Lyon and the United States' reiteration of its commitment to the bases of a just, comprehensive solution in the Middle East, especially the land-for-peace principle.

According to Israel's demands, Netanyahu's proposal means disarming the Lebanese resistance and involving the Lebanese Government in a separate peace agreement. This is in addition to a series of security conditions that practically abolish Lebanon's sovereignty over its territory, ignore UN Security Council Resolution 425, and allow Israel to interfere in Lebanese affairs.

However, Lebanon, both officially and publicly, rejected this notion because it is a blatant attempt to drive a wedge between the two sisterly countries — Lebanon and Syria — and to separate the two tracks. The Israeli notion also aims to circumvent UN Security Council Resolution 425, which provides for Israel's unconditional withdrawal from Lebanon. Besides, this offer aims to separate Lebanon, threaten Syria's security, and maintain the occupation.

Netanyahu's game is fully exposed. Observers of regional developments are wondering: Why is Israel opposed to the course of comprehensive peace? Why is it rejecting the bases of peace, the core of the UN Security Council resolutions, and the U.S. initiative? Why does it insist on partial agreements that do not lead to peace and do not provide the most basic requirements of security? On the other hand, the comprehensive peace proposed by the Arabs provides security and tranquility because it is based on international consensus and a collective Arab will that nobody can ignore or trespass. Undoubtedly, the answer is simple and can be drawn from Netanyahu's statements and positions. The Likud leader does not want withdrawal and insists on occupation, settlement building, and expansion. Peace and occupation are mutually exclusive. Netanyahu's Lebanon First proposal is a major deception that aims to draw a wedge between Lebanon and Syria and to evade the implementation of Resolution 425 providing for unconditional withdrawal.

Syria and Lebanon will not relinquish their territory. They will never be drawn behind distorted, partial solutions. They were not fooled by Israel's past tricks and will not be fooled by Israel's present or future tricks. No matter who forms the government in Israel, Israel has no option but full withdrawal and the complete implementation of UN Security Council resolutions if it wants peace. Syria, Lebanon, and the Arabs want genuine peace guaranteed by the resolutions of the international legitimacy. Only this will provide security and stability for all.

Syria: Papers Term Netanyahu's Lebanon Proposal 'Deadly Trap'

JN2907084196 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0450 GMT 29 Jul 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] Under the headline "Deadly Trap," TISHRIN today editorializes on a proposal made by Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu on Lebanon. The paper says this proposal was not made in goodwill or to revive the peace process and provide the necessary elements for its success. By making this proposal, the head of the Israeli Government sought to break Israel's growing isolation as a result of the Likud government's refusal to provide the requirements of a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

TISHRIN adds that by advancing the Lebanon-first argument, the head of the Israeli Government sought to deceive the world and mislead Arab public opinion by promoting false illusions about the government's plan to pursue the peace process. Netanyahu sought to achieve a second objective by making this proposal, namely, to deal with Lebanon on its own and impose on it a surrender agreement similar to the infamous May agreement, whose architects sought to place Lebanon under Israeli protection. A third objective sought by Netanyahu is to sabotage the march of national accord and development in Lebanon and ignite a new civil war that burns all that was built in Lebanon.

TISHRIN says: The brothers in Lebanon were aware of the evil objectives behind Netanyahu's proposal. Therefore, they rejected it, deeming it a new Israeli maneuver against Lebanon and its security. They also warned against being carried away by this Israeli mirage that leads to death and ruin. The paper says the position of Lebanese officials on Netanyahu's argument was logical and understandable. This is because the Lebanese officials have come to the conclusion that Israel does not harbor good for Lebanon and that all Lebanon's tragedies are caused by Israeli schemes, which provided the proper circumstances for igniting a bloody civil war in Lebanon, encouraged the partition of this country, and launched several destructive wars against it, the last of which was Operation Grapes of Wrath. This operation showed the deep-seated grudge held by Israel against Lebanon and its people.

TISHRIN adds: The Netanyahu government did not adopt a plan for peace with the Arabs. On the contrary, the head of this government announced his absolute rejection of the land-for-peace principle and insisted on keeping the occupied Arab territories. He also launched threats against Lebanon. He is destroying the material foundations of a just and comprehensive solution by announcing his adherence to a plan to set up Torah Israel. Netanyahu has no plans to make equitable peace with Lebanon or any other Arab country.

TISHRIN concludes: The Israeli Government is not thinking about withdrawing from Lebanon and leaving it to handle its own affairs and dress the wounds caused to it by Israeli aggression. On the contrary, the Netanyahu government is seeking to set a deadly trap that destroys all achievements in Lebanon, kills its people, assassinates its future and allegiance, and turns it into a launching pad to fire missiles of conspiracy against Syria and the Arab nation. If Israel wants peace with Lebanon and the Arabs, it should implement Resolution 425 that stipulates the unconditional withdrawal of the occupier Israeli forces from southern Lebanon. Israel must also declare that it agrees to the principles adopted by the world, which are land for peace and implementing UN Resolutions 242 and 338.

Under the headline "Netanyahu's Rejected Proposals," AL-BA'TH comments on recent diplomatic moves in the region to advance peace efforts. These moves closed with Israel's hard-line positions. The head of the Likud government has not changed his familiar no's.

AL-BA'TH says the whole world is now convinced that Netanyahu is trying to blow up and replace the Madrid formula in accordance with his conditions that are rejected by the Arabs and the world. The paper says Netanyahu's proposals seek to circumvent the principles and foundations of the peace process. He set out by proposing security for peace and concluded with the Lebanon-first slogan. These proposals highlight the nature of Israel's aggressive policy, based on keeping the land and increasing Israel's force to control the resources of the region. In addition, Netanyahu is blatantly trying to exploit the so-called political vacuum or overtime stage as a result of the election campaign in the United States.

AL-BA'TH concludes: If Netanyahu tries to drive a wedge between Arab ranks, which are united on the Cairo summit resolutions, or to weaken the strategic relations between Syria and Lebanon, then he will be making a new mistake. Arab solidarity is a fact that cannot be ignored. Syria and Lebanon share the same objectives and destiny. The relationship between them cannot be severed by malicious proposals whose method and objective are exposed.

Syria: Press—Israel Trying To Separate Syrian, Lebanese Tracks

JN2807081496 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0500 GMT 28 Jul 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] Under the headline "A Catastrophic Policy," the newspaper AL-THAWRAH says: Syria supported peace efforts and salvaged the peace process every time Israel obstructed and hampered it. Syria, which is anxious to achieve just and comprehensive peace, cannot abandon a single grain of its territory, nor can it bargain over a single national or pan-Arab right.

AL-THAWRAH adds: Those near and far are well aware that it is Israel which is obstructing the achievement of real progress in the peace process. It is the party that is wasting the opportunity for security and peace in the region. The Peres-led government lacked the courage to opt for peace with Syria. It wasted a historic opportunity to achieve peace, security, and stability. Likewise, the Netanyahu-led government, given its intransigent stands and unacceptable ambitions, is acting in a manner that will only hasten the demise of the peace opportunity.

Concluding, AL-THAWRAH says: Israel professes to be an advocate of peace. It is saying that it is ready for negotiations. Meanwhile, it is trying to obtain security and peace and retain its control of the territories at the same time. It wants the Arabs to abandon their rights and acquiesce to Israeli domination, which is unacceptable to the Arabs and the world at large, because this would usher in untold damage and cause a real catastrophe in the region.

The newspaper TISHRIN publishes a commentary on the Lebanese position, which rejects the Netanyahu government's attempts to cause a split in the joint Lebanese-Syrian stand and separate the Syrian and Lebanese tracks in order to drag Lebanon to a shameful reconciliation that would undermine its sovereignty over its territory and allow Israel to meddle in its domestic affairs under the guise of upholding security and thus torpedo UN Security Council Resolution 425, which provides for unconditional Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon.

Under the headline "First and Last, Comprehensive Peace is the Goal," the newspaper TISHRIN adds: Israel refused to comply with Resolution 425 and continued its open war against the Lebanese to disturb national accord, foment tension, and threaten Syria.

The paper wonders: Why is Israel currently promoting the notion of Lebanon first instead of the notion of comprehensive peace on all fronts? Why is Israel rejecting peace with all Arabs?

The paper adds: The peace sought by the Arabs is the peace that would dismantle occupation. The Arabs have expressed their willingness to achieve a durable and firm peace based on the relevant international legitimacy resolutions and the land-for-peace principle.

The paper goes on to say: Israel is opposed to just and comprehensive peace. It continues with its intransigence and opposition to withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories. That is why it is promoting peace slogans that are void of any substance. Lebanon is demanding the implementation of Resolution 425. It has repeatedly expressed its support for Syria in its efforts to achieve a just and comprehensive peace that would remove occupation, consecrate international law, and end Israel's crazy belligerency.

Syria: Syrian Paper Reports 'Breakdown' Among Pro-Israel Militias

JN2407105796 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0745 GMT 24 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 24 Jul (SANA) — The newspaper TISHRIN says that the frequent breakdowns among members of the agent militias in southern Lebanon confirm that these militias have become a real burden on their command and on Israel.

In an article in the "Opinion" column, the newspaper says: The psychological condition of the members of these militias is extremely bad and is being described as mass psychopathy. Desertions are on the increase and happen daily. Military capabilities are at their lowest level. Israel's attempts to correct the situation have been fruitless, despite financial incentives, threats, and psychological pressure.

The paper adds: Despite frequent visits by Israeli Government officials to occupied southern Lebanon and the temptation and intimidation policy pursued with these militias, things have gone against Israel's wishes. These militias are now experiencing a state of total collapse.

The paper notes that the agent detainees who were released by the national resistance refused to return to the occupied strip after they chose the path of repentance. The paper maintains that the forthcoming days will witness many such repentances, as confirmed by sources in occupied southern Lebanon.

Syria: Press on Talks With U.S. Envoy, Need For Israeli Withdrawal

JN2607110596 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0445 GMT 26 Jul 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In a commentary, AL-THAWRAH writes: During his meeting with U.S. Envoy Dennis Ross, President Hafiz al-Asad reaffirmed Syria's firm, principled position on the issue of peace and continued commitment to the peace process. He also underlined that Syria will continue its efforts to make the process arrive at its goal of comprehensive and just peace. The U.S. envoy, for his part, expressed his country's keenness to activate the peace process in accordance with the agreed upon principles; namely, the UN Security Council resolutions and the land-for-peace formula. The peace process was launched in Madrid five years ago on the basis of these principles,

The paper adds: What Syria and the United States underlined yesterday enjoys the support and backing of the entire world, which wishes to see the desired peace prevailing in this part of the world. However, Israel, which does not wish to see this peace established, continued for the past five years to place obstacles to prevent any progress in the peace process. Israel is the only country in the world now that opposes the trends and fundamentals of peace. It insists on rejecting withdrawal from the Golan Heights, South Lebanon, Jerusalem, and the other occupied Arab territories; on denying the Palestinian rights; and on continuing with the policy of settlement building in defiance of the laws and resolutions of international legitimacy and the world's desire to achieve peace.

AL-THAWRAH says: The active U.S.-Russian moves must concentrate on curbing this Israeli defiance of the principles of peace. They must seek to make Israel return to the correct path and force it to abide by, and implement the basic elements and requirements of peace.

In another commentary, AL-THAWRAH says: Any progress in the peace process hinges on Israel's full commitment to the principles of international legitimacy, the Madrid terms of reference, and the land-for-peace formula. No one can imagine how peace can be established with the absence of such a commitment and while Israeli occupation of Arab territory continues.

AL-THAWRAH notes that Syria repeatedly stresses, through President al-Asad, its firm and principled position on the issue of just and comprehensive peace and its commitment to the peace process and desire to undertake efforts to make it arrive at its goal of a just and comprehensive peace. The paper says: He who insists on continuing his occupation of the others' territory and refuses to accept international resolutions is the fanatic. And he who refuses to see peace established must be held fully responsible and must be punished.

AL-BA'TH discusses Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's unacceptable arguments. The paper says: Since he announced his election program, which is based on rejecting the principles and fundamentals of peace, the world has been confronting the new Israeli prime minister with logic, calling on him not to renounce the peace process as this will threaten not only the region, but the entire world.

AL-BA'TH adds: Netanyahu, however, turned his back on the world community and shunned the UN resolutions. He began to escalate his intransigent positions under various pretexts, which have one objective; namely, to freeze the Madrid formula and replace it with a completely different formula. The paper stresses that Netanyahu cannot impose his conditions or introduce any formula other than that of Madrid, which, the world agreed, provides the means to arrive at a just and comprehensive peace that would return rights and achieve security and stability.

The paper stresses that if the cohesive Arab position maintains, and develops its strength in the direction of the strategic option of peace, the world will support it to foil all attempts by Israeli policy that seek to torpedo all the principles of the peace process.

AL-BA'TH concludes: Any statements that ignore the principles of the peace process and the efforts made in that regard will be a waste of time, and no one will benefit from this, not even Israel, because the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace hinges, now and in the future, on its complete withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories.

Syria: Press Notes U.S. Commitment to Land-for-Peace Principle

JN2707102596 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0450 GMT 27 Jul 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In an editorial headlined "Peace and the Fall of Illusions," AL-THAWRAH notes that Syria, through leader al-Asad, stressed its commitment to the peace process, driven by its principled stand which is based on the resolutions of international legitimacy and the land-for-peace principle according to the U.S. initiative. The paper adds: Through the U.S. envoy to President Hafiz al-Asad, the United States yesterday reiterated its commitment to work to achieve peace on the basis of the land-for-peace principle and according to the resolutions of international legitimacy. However, there seems to be a disruption of this logical sequence, for the other party — Israel and Netanyahu — completely reject the U.S. and Syrian commitment to the peace process and the principles on which it is based; namely, the UN resolutions and the land-for-peace formula.

AL-THAWRAH says that Netanyahu insists on forcing into this equation new, malicious concepts he had propagated in the United States. He is now trying to market these concepts as a basis for the peace he wants, which is a very strange peace. It is a peace that completely contradicts any concepts of a just, comprehensive peace. Netanyahu is introducing a new factor into the equation. He proposes security for peace as an alternative to the land-for-peace formula. Evidently and unambiguously, he wants territory, peace, and security from the Arabs without giving them anything in return. To impose his concepts by force and intimidation, he brandishes the stick of conventional and nonconventional weapons in order to impose his rejected logic — the logic of security that disregards others and their security, as if others' security is unimportant and as if others must be a tool for serving his and Israel's security.

AL-THAWRAH says that up to now, Netanyahu did not try to tell the world one word to ease the concern caused by his logic which is based on annexation, expansion, occupation, and militarization.

AL-THAWRAH believes that Netanyahu may have wanted to practice ugly extortion against the United States in this period leading up to the U.S. elections. Hence, the paper says, one can understand U.S. coordinator Ross' statement that the United States is committed to the peace process on the basis of UN resolutions and the land-for peace principle, but it will not put pressure on Israel. The paper says: The peace process does not need new theories and proposals. Rather, it needs practice, declared commitment, and for Israel to consider peace its strategic option, just as Syria and all the Arabs did. This means that Israel must declare commitment to the peace process according to the known bases of international legitimacy and agree to completely and comprehensively evacuate the occupied Arab territories. Otherwise, any maneuvers and pretensions will be regarded as just an exposed attempt to evade the obligations of peace.

Under the headline "No Going Back on the Land-for-Peace Principle," TISHRIN says: It has become certain that Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's statements on his commitment to the Middle East peace process are aimed to support his proposals and policies that are based on rejecting peace and circumventing the core and basis of the peace process. This is because all signs and events prove that Netanyahu is still far away from the peace process and seeks to undermine it.

TISHRIN asks: How can we believe that Netanyahu is working for peace at a time when he rejects the land-for-peace formula and raises his special interpretation of Resolutions 242 and 338 and does not recognize the two resolutions' opposition to the occupation of others' territory by force? How can we believe Netanyahu as he reiterates his condemned allegation that security is above peace and that what is offered is peace in return for peace. TISHRIN believes Netanyahu's justifications for holding on to the occupied Arab territories can be made only by one who rejects the peace process and is absolutely hostile to a just, comprehensive peace. This is what the Israeli officials, led by Netanyahu, deliberately and very brazenly made clear, without regard for the international community and its will and resolutions, which demand full Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories as an essential prerequisite and basis for achieving a just, comprehensive peace.

Concluding, TISHRIN says: Peace does not need new Israeli interpretations and pretexts. The road leading to peace is clear and needs nothing but response to the principles and bases of peace as established by the Madrid conference in accordance with the land-for-peace principle and Resolutions 242, 338, and 425. Besides, the negotiations have never been an end in themselves. They cannot be held in a vacuum and without full commitment by Israel to respond to the negotiations' objectives, which are supported by pledges and assurances. All that must begin by Israel's clear and explicit commitment to withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories within the framework of a just, comprehensive peace in the region.

Syria: 'Arafat Trip to Syria Marks Return to 'Wait-and-See' Policy

MM2607120396 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 26 Jul 96 p 15

[Article by Khayrallah Khayrallah: "...In Order To Foil the Game of Negotiating for Its Own Sake"]

[FBIS Translated Text] One can only welcome the Syrian-Palestinian rapprochement, particularly in view of the fact that this rapprochement serves the Arab situation in general and aims at protecting it from the regional complications caused by Binyamin Netanyahu's election as Israel's prime minister and the Likud bloc's return to power. Also, one can only welcome Yasir 'Arafat's visit to Syria, and the fact that its starting point was from the Palestinian land of Gaza and not from elsewhere. The Oslo agreement enabled Abu-'Ammar ['Arafat] to return to the land of Palestine instead of remaining hostage to the Beirut streets and yards, or remaining the Palestinian people's leader...in remote Tunisia.

This is a new page in Syrian-Palestinian relations, which over the past 20 years and even since the start of the Fatah movement in 1965 have been characterized by a fundamental disagreement between the two sides on how to regain the land of Palestine. Now that this page has been turned, one can say that the two sides are in a better position, which should help them in the wait-and-see game.

The return to the wait-and-see game is perfectly normal, because Binyamin Netanyahu does not seem to be in a hurry for anything, and least of all peace with the Arabs, because apart from the ideological differences between the Labor Party and the Likud bloc, the age factor plays a key role in making Netanyahu different from Yitzhaq Rabin and Shim'on Peres. This factor exerts a great deal of influence on the thinking of the 46-year-old Netanyahu who views politics from the perspective of how to use it to achieve his objectives. High on the list of his objectives is his desire to remain prime minister after the year 2000, in a country where the number of voters affiliated with the religious parties is constantly increasing to the detriment of those who are closer to Western, liberal culture. Both Rabin and Peres, in their own way, were in a hurry to crown their political careers with peace with the Arabs after reaching their seventies, after having participated in all the Israeli wars and after becoming an integral part of the Arab-Israeli conflict's history. Hence, it seems that the Arabs should have perhaps reformulated their negotiating strategy on the premise that Netanyahu is playing the wait-and-see card, an essential card for him, not only because of his age, but also because he does not belong to the region, its issues, problems, and conflicts, particularly since he spent a major part of his life in the United States, in addition to the fact that he is being assisted by advisers who came to Israel with a simplistic view of the Arabs and the Middle East in mind, the very same view held by New York religious Jews.

While waiting for Netanyahu to become acquainted with the realities of the region, the Arabs can only initiate a rapprochement between them. In this context, the Syrian-Palestinian summit is a first and essential step, especially if it comes within a new strategy aimed at thwarting the game of negotiating for its own sake. This is a game which appeals to some Israeli officials who believe that creating a new, irreversible fait accompli is more important than peace.

Or was that what Yitzhaq Shamir had in mind when he went — was dragged, to be more precise — to the Madrid conference?

Syria: Palestinians Involved in Anti-Jordan Actions Arrested

JN2807121596 Amman AL-URDUN in Arabic
27 Jul 96 p 2

[FBIS Translated Text] Palestinian opposition sources based in Amman said that the Syrian authorities recently arrested several cadres of fundamentalist Palestinian factions whose names were listed in the file His Majesty King Husayn delivered to the Syrian president at a meeting they held on the sidelines of the recent Cairo summit. The sources indicated that the arrests included supporters of Islamic Jihad and the Colonel Ahmad Muhanna group. Col. Ahmad Muhanna is leader of the Palestinian Hizballah. Among those arrested was 'Abd-al-Mu'ti Abu-Mu'ilah, who is believed to have been involved in the terrorist attempts unearthed by security organs in recent months.

The Jordanian file included photographs, addresses, names, and telephone numbers of some of those involved in these attempts who live in Syria. The file also included details and information that President al-Asad said would be investigated and followed up. The Jordanian authorities said that the names included in the file amounted to only 10 percent of those really involved. This measure was meant to protect the sources which provided the information.

Syria: Palestinians, 'Afghan Arabs' Said To Plan Attacks in Jordan

MM2907105196 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic
28 Jul 96 pp 1, 6

[Report by Ibrahim Humaydi: "'Afghans' Held in Syria Planned To Carry Out Attacks in Jordan"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Damascus, Cairo, London, AL-HAYAH — Informed Arab sources have told AL-HAYAH that the Syrian authorities recently arrested five Palestinians and about 10 "Afghan Arabs" because of "activities incompatible with the decision to allow them to stay in Syria." The sources said that interrogations uncovered a group led by a Palestinian who had previously joined a number of organizations that were planning to launch "military operations from Jordanian territory."

The sources pointed out that the five Palestinians held belong to Palestinian opposition groups. They are: Muhammad al-Mabhuh from the Islamic Resistance Movement "Hamas," Nafidh al-A'raj and 'Abd-al-Qadir Abu-'Ubaydah from the Islamic Jihad Movement, Yusuf Jadid from Fatah-the Uprising, and 'Abd-al-Mu'ti Abu-Mu'aylaq, who left Fatah under Yasir 'Arafat to join Hamas and then the Islamic Jihad until he settled down in the so-called Hizballah-Palestine.

Ahmad Muhanna had tried to set up this party after he left the Islamic Jihad a few years ago but he failed.

The sources added that Abu-Mu'aylaq, who was assistant to Muhanna, "tried to recruit a number of young men loyal to some Palestinian organizations with a view to carrying out military operations in Israel through Jordanian territory or against Israeli targets in Jordan."

The sources pointed out that he sent Fawzi 'Awadallah, who is loyal to Hamas, to "explore the situation in

Jordan but he was arrested there two months ago by Jordanian intelligence services, and is still held there."

The sources went on to say that Abu-Mu'aylaq "insisted on sending other elements to Jordanian territory to carry out military operations." The sources stressed that Abu-Mu'aylaq started to work on his own away from any other Palestinian organization, and that facilitated his arrest following Jordanian complaints about the activities of some Palestinians in Jordan through Syrian territory.

King Husayn of Jordan handed to Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad during their meeting on the periphery of the Cairo summit last month a dossier referring to 56 bombing attempts in Jordan, "attempts launched from Syrian territory and planned by Damascus-based organizations." But a Syrian official has told AL-HAYAH that "the movement of Palestinian organizations between Syria and Jordan is not subject to any Syrian observation, and these organizations have branches in Jordan just as they have branches in Syria." The official added that elements from these organizations "have been moving between Syria and Jordan since they left Palestine."

The informed sources said there is no link between the arrest of Fatah-the Uprising official Jadid and the movement's announcement claiming responsibility for a military operation against Israeli soldiers, which was launched from Jordanian territory and resulted in three soldiers being killed. The sources added that the arrest is attributable to "his link with Abu-Mu'aylaq's group." However, the sources pointed out that the Syrian authorities "interrogated a number of Palestinian opposition forces in the light of information supplied by the Jordanians." The sources stressed that there was no torture and that it was all to do with inquiring about the organizations' link with the people working with Abu-Mu'aylaq.

Islamic Jihad leader Dr. Ramadan 'Abdallah Shallah has told AL-HAYAH that "no one has been arrested because of his affiliation to the movement or for carrying out anything in its name." He added: "Our jihad in the movement is limited to Palestine, and we have not carried out any military or security action or activities in Jordan or elsewhere."

Hamas representative Mustafa al-Qalu' (Abu-Muhammad) shared Shallah's view, saying: "I have no knowledge of the arrests." He stressed that the movement "is opposed to any action or measure against Jordan. Our resistance is limited to the occupied territories and inside Palestine." He expressed his objection to "any action targeting Israelis in Jordan. And since we are opposed to any actions launched from Jordan against the Israelis, certainly we are against any action launched from Syria against Jordan." However, he pointed out that "the blame for any mistake committed by a particular person should be pinned on this person (not the movement as a whole)."

Meanwhile, the informed sources said that the arrest campaign against the "Afghan Arabs" included five Egyptians, three Algerians, and a number of others from Sudan and Yemen. The sources pointed out that the Sudanese authorities "have expelled a number of Afghan Arabs within the framework of the Egyptian-Sudanese rapprochement." [passage omitted]

Syria: Talks on Bahrain-Financed Air Defense Equipment Under Way

JN2607153896 Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 26 Jul 96 p 14

[FBIS Translated Text] After the recent tension with Turkey, Syria began a series of negotiations with Russia and France to obtain advanced air defense equipment to be used in the northern part of the country. European sources asserted that the negotiations are now focusing on the financing and that, according to Damascus, Bahrain promised to finance the deal. The same sources linked this information to Syria's mediation efforts between Bahrain and Iran.

Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' made a shuttle tour between Manama and Tehran to solve a dispute between the two capitals over the incidents in Bahrain. But European sources believe that Bahrain's decision to finance the Syrian air defense system deal depends on the success of Syria's mediation.

The same sources said that Bahrain presented a list of people in Iran wanted by Bahrain, but that Manama has not yet received a positive reply from the Iranian leadership. Among the wanted people residing in Iran is 'Adil 'Ashuli, official in charge of military training in Bahrain's Hizballah, and Khalil Sultan, official in charge of ideological mobilization.

Syria's mediation between Bahrain and Iran has not achieved much, as it has so far restricted itself to efforts to stop the media campaigns.

Syria: Arab League Chief Arrives, Makes Statement

JN2807143996 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1115 GMT 28 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid arrived in Damascus today, accompanied by Ahmad 'Adil, assistant Arab League secretary general. 'Abd-al-Majid was on arrival received by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar'.

Following his arrival, Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid told a SANA correspondent: I am pleased to visit fraternal Syria once again to meet with the Syrian leadership, which is known for its wisdom and enlightened ideas. We will discuss and analyze the current situation, which we hope will always be in the interest of the joint Arab action that we all seek.

The Arab League secretary general was met at the Syrian-Lebanese border checkpoint by 'Adnan 'Umran, assistant to the foreign minister; Zuhayr Mastruq, deputy commissioner general of the Israel Boycott Office; and several Foreign Ministry officials.

Syria: Foreign Minister Receives Arab League Secretary General

JN2807170096 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1515 GMT 28 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' received Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid this afternoon. The meeting was attended by 'Adnan 'Umran, assistant to foreign minister; Taha al-Khayrat, director of the Arab Homeland Department; and Ahmad 'Adil, Arab League assistant secretary general.

Discussions during the meeting dealt with the Arab situation in general, the results of the recent Arab summit in Cairo, and efforts to implement the resolutions of that summit. Discussions also dealt with the future of the peace process in light of the Israeli stands that reject the founding principles of the peace process. These principles are represented by the resolutions of the international legitimacy, especially UN Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, and 425, and the land-for-peace principle.

Syria: Al-Asad Receives Arab League Chief 'Abd-al-Majid in Latakia

JN2907143996 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1115 GMT 29 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Hafiz al-Asad received Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid in the Presidential Palace in Latakia at 1130 today. The meeting was attended by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar.' They discussed the Arab situation, regional developments, the Cairo Arab summit resolutions, and the peace process.

Syria: Syrian Officials Condone 'Smuggling Trade'

MM2907111996 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 29 Jul 96 p 2

[Reports by 'Imad al-Furayh in Amman and AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT bureau in London: "Active Smuggling Between Syria and Iraq; Traders Got Green Light from Baghdad"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Informed Iraqi sources in Amman have spoken of increasing smuggling of goods and commodities between Iraq and Syria with the knowledge of officials in both countries, but they ruled out the possibility of formal relations between them.

The sources said that trade between Syria and Iraq is active through unofficial routes, or what is called "smuggling" trade across the border between the two countries.

They added that border officials in both countries are aware of this, especially the Syrian authorities, who are turning a blind eye to smuggling involving the entry of Syrian canned and dried food and textiles into Iraq without strict control by the border authorities.

The sources also said that the past period has seen a large-scale presence of Iraqi traders linked to 'Udayy, the eldest son of Iraqi President Saddam Husayn, in Damascus, adding that 'Udayy gave these traders the green light to visit Damascus by legitimate routes via Jordan or by the common Iraqi-Syrian smuggling routes where there is no strict security.

Last month 'Udayy Saddam Husayn, through his daily newspaper BABIL, called for openness to Syria and for the establishment of good relations with Syrian officials, but his call has so far not produced a Syrian official response.

The Iraqi sources in Amman spoke of a message from President Saddam Husayn to Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad carried by Hamid Yusuf al-Tikriti, former Iraqi information minister and chairman of the Iraqi National Assembly's Culture and Information Committee, during the conference of Arab parliamentarians held in Damascus two months ago. The message called for a new page to be turned and bygones to be bygones and urged the establishment of firm relations between the two countries. Syrian People's Assembly Speaker 'Abd-al-Qadir Qaddurah received the message. Hamid Yusuf al-Tikriti did not get a clear answer to the Iraqi president's message but he was included in the small delegation of Arab parliamentarians chosen to meet with the Syrian president. Furthermore, Syrian television, and the first time, gave prominence to al-Tikriti's presence and his name was repeatedly mentioned in Damascus.

The Syrian delegation which visited Baghdad early this month to attend the joint Iraqi-Syrian meetings on sharing Euphrates water was honored by Iraqi officials, and these meetings were crowned with close views and joint decisions.

Whereas Iraqi opposition sources based in Damascus have denied any progress in Syrian-Iraqi relations and any Syrian response or intention to restore relations, the Iraqi leadership, according to sources close to it, promised Syria several major commercial deals, and promised to operate the Iraqi pipelines which pass through Syria to its ports on the Mediterranian and to use its ports for receiving Iraqi goods if the memorandum of understanding signed between Iraq and the UN secretariat on 20 May is implemented.

An Iraqi opposition official living in Damascus has confirmed that an Iraqi businessman in Amman who has close links with the Iraqi leadership visited Damascus at the invitation of an Iraqi oppositionist so that the way could be paved for him to meet with Syrian officials, and that that businessman conveyed a message from 'Udayy to that Iraqi oppositionist urging him to let bygones be bygones and to discuss with Syrian officials the question of reopening the Syrian-Iraqi borders, but that mission did not achieve any significant success and the Iraqi businessman returned from Damascus to Baghdad via Amman to inform the Iraqi leadership of the results.

Before proceeding to Baghdad he met with Nuri al-Marsumi, under secretary of the Iraqi Ministry of Culture and Information, who was in Amman and a guest at a dinner banquet given by that Iraqi businessman.

The Iraqi opposition official had earlier confirmed that he spoke to Syrian officials about the need to open the borders to Iraq and the Iraqis and not to the Iraqi regime. He said that he received positive promises in this connection, which is what the Iraqi leadership wanted and still wants in order to find an outlet through Jordan.

The informed Iraqi sources in Amman said that trade relations between Iraqi and Syrian are currently similar to trade relations between Iraq and Iran, where smuggling routes between the two countries are open without border security control and with the knowledge of officials in both countries, although there is no open official rapprochement between the two countries.

The sources said that official Syrian-Iraqi rapprochement is unlikely because of the personal differences between President al-Asad and President Saddam Husayn and because of the deep-rooted political differences between the two regimes, each of which rules in the name of the [Arab Socialist] Ba'th party, particularly as Syria is harboring many Iraqi opposition factions, figures, and parties, as well as the Provisional Iraqi Regional Command of the Ba'th Party, while Baghdad is harboring the Provisional Syrian Regional Command of the Ba'th Party, as well as an office for the Syrian organization and Syrian oppositionists.

Syria: Bar Association To Support 'Antinormalization' Groups

JN2807164196 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1515 GMT 28 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The board of Syrian Bar Association decided to consider itself a permanent central regional committee to combat normalization. The aim of the committee will be to support antinormalization committees in Arab states whose governments have moved toward normalization with Israel.

In a letter of reply to Faruq Abu-'Isa, secretary general of the Arab Lawyers Federation, Ahmad 'Idu, head of the Syrian Bar Association, stressed the bar association's adherence to the position of Arab Syria — leadership and people — on pan-Arab and constant, principled issues and its rejection of all forms of normalization with Israel.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Hekmatyar Asks Taleban To Declare Aims, Stop Rocket Strikes

LD2607190196 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 26 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Today Brother Hekmatyar, prime minister of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, performed and led the Friday prayers in the Pol-e Kheshti grand mosque.

The prime minister's press office told BAKHTAR that in the sermon Brother Hekmatyar spoke about the revelation of God's messages, keeping promises, the restoration of security, safeguarding the lives and property of Muslims, and invitations to other groups to join the peace axis.

In part of his talk, the prime minister asked the Taleban group to declare their specific plan and views instead of insisting on fighting and thus causing the destruction of the country, and thus choose the path of dialogue and understanding.

Brother Hekmatyar addressed the Taleban group: If you are after the post of prime minister or president then you can raise this matter on the conference table. And you must be confident that I will support your every reasonable point or plan.

In addressing the Taleban, Brother Hekmatyar raised this question: What crime have the persecuted citizens of Kabul committed that the Taleban group, by firing rockets, soil them with blood and dust like a little bird. Brother Hekmatyar asked the Taleban group to stop firing rockets at Kabul city.

The country's prime minister then said that henceforth not even one drop of any Afghan blood should be shed, to seize or transfer power. Such a thing can only be done according to the principles of Islamic law. Brother Hekmatyar said: Governing the people with tanks and artillery is impermissible [haram].

Afghanistan: Habibi Returns, Says Bosnian Team To Visit Iran

LD2807114596 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 28 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] First Vice-President Hasan Habibi who visited Bosnia at the head of a senior political and economic delegation, returned to Tehran this morning.

First Vice-President Habibi said about the outcome of his trip: The Islamic Republic of Iran is due to give Bosnia and Herzegovina 50 million dollars' worth of medium-term credit to be spent on the infrastructural, industrial, and commercial sectors.

Mr. Habibi referred to the Islamic Republic of Iran's agreement to complete, render operational, and secure the primary material for the steel factory of Zenica city in Bosnia. He said: Experts working on this project are due to hold their talks in the coming week, when Bosnian officials will visit Tehran.

He added that during the trip, cooperation over the private sector was also discussed with Bosnian officials and it was decided to begin expert talks in this connection.

Mr. Habibi referred to the brief stop-over in Istanbul by the Iranian delegation, on their return to Tehran, and said: We talked to Turkish officials there about issues of mutual interest between the two countries. He added: Mr. Necmettin Erbakan, Turkey's new prime minister, will be travelling to Iran in the near future, and we hope to be able to raise the level of relations and bilateral cooperation more than before.

Afghanistan: Afghan Envoy on Status of 'Afghan Arabs'

MM2607131796 London AL-WASAT in Arabic 22-28 Jul 96 p 35

[Interview with Afghan Ambassador to Egypt Seyyed Fazlallah Fazel by Ashraf al-Faqiyy in Cairo; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Al-Faqiyy] How do you explain the appointment of Hekmatyar, the enemy of yesterday and the ally of tomorrow, as prime minister? Is this a contradiction in President Rabbani's policy, or is it attributable to his weak military position?

[Fazel] Hekmatyar was prime minister under the Peshawar agreement signed by the mojahedin following their victory over the communist regime. Hekmatyar was supposed to go to Kabul to assume his job as prime minister, but he did not. Instead, he started to attack Kabul on numerous pretexts, including forcing 'Abdol Rashid Dostam's forces to leave the capital on the pretext that the latter had fought alongside the communist government against the mojahedin. The government responded, moving Dostam to Mazar-e Sharif. But the surprise was the alliance forged among Dostam, Hekmatyar, and Sebghatollah Mojadeddi to topple Rabbani's government. Hekmatyar was dismissed. Then the Taleban movement emerged and attacked his forces, evicting them from Sharazya [as transliterated] near Kabul. His rocket batteries were based in Sharazya, from where he had shelled the capital.

[Al-Faqiyy] You spoke about Hekmatyar. What about the Taleban movement?

[Fazel] When Pakistan was sure that Hekmatyar was not capable of reaching power and that the Afghan Government was not loyal to its policy in the region, especially as regards its position on Kashmir, it began to form another Taleban corps. And because the Afghan people respect those who study religious subjects, Pakistan decided to push a group of Afghan students studying religion in Pakistani mosques to the forefront, with Pashtun elements behind them.

Taleban gained its popularity as a result of its demand for a halt to the fighting between Rabbani and Hekmatyar, the formation of an Islamic government, the expulsion of communists, and a change in the administrative makeup in a number of governorates. It was helped by a number of communist Pashtun officers who had sought refuge in neighboring states, where Pakistani intelligence succeeded in recruiting them.

[Al-Faqiyy] What you said confirms the Afghan Government's weakness in the face of Pakistani interference.

[Fazel] The Afghan Government inherited remnants of a government: a ruined infrastructure, a disjointed Army, and a zero economy. The Rabbani government had to tackle these issues. This is in addition to the spread of arms among the people (the resistance) and military militias, and the existence of numerous nationalities and languages. This is why Pakistan succeeded. Not because of the government's weakness, but because of these factors.

[Al-Faqiyy] What about the U.S. role in Afghanistan?

[Fazel] We have no conclusive evidence of direct U.S. interference in Afghan affairs. However, the continuation of Taleban's operations proves that it is receiving military and financial support, and we demand that the aid to the warring parties in Afghanistan be suspended.

[Al-Faqiyy] What about the "Afghan Arabs'" role in the conflict?

[Fazel] During the Afghan liberation war against Russia the mojahedin came from Arab and Western states to take part in the duty of jihad against the occupation. They played a distinguished role in the liberation process, and God will reward them.

When the Afghans assumed power, non-Afghan mojahedin were asked to return to their countries and not to get involved in the conflict among the Afghan parties. But regrettably they joined the various parties and fought against the Rabbani government. Most of them refused to return to their countries and many were killed in the fighting. As for the remaining ones, they have joined Taleban and live in the areas under its control.

[Al-Faqiyy] Does that mean that Afghanistan has turned into a shelter for those carrying out terrorist operations in Arab states?

[Fazel] The Arabs wanted by Arab states on charges of terrorism live in tribal areas on the Afghan-Pakistani border. It is a mountainous area whose inhabitants are under the control of neither the Afghan Government nor the Pakistani Government. They have their own tribal system. Having been pursued by Pakistani authorities and faced difficulties in Afghanistan, the Afghan Arabs managed to integrate with the people in that area, which enabled them to make some wealth and marry from the tribe, thus becoming members of it.

[Al-Faqiyy] What about Usamah Bin-Ladin in the light of what the Sudanese authorities said?

[Fazel] I have no confirmed information in this connection. If Bin-Ladin is on Afghan territory, he must be in the Taleban-controlled Pashtunestan region on the Pakistani border.

[Al-Faqiyy] How many Afghan Arabs are there in Afghanistan?

[Fazel] The Afghan Arab community is not as big as the Arab and European media say. They continue to associate any problem they have with the Afghan Arabs. The United States accuses the Afghan Arabs of the bombing incidents carried out against it, and Arab officials tend to level accusations at the Afghan Arabs in order to conceal problems that exist in their states. It is a false accusation. The Afghan Arabs do not exceed a few hundreds.

[Al-Faqiyy] You said that military confrontations resulted in the death of a number of Afghan Arabs, but you made no mention of the POW's. Why? Have they been returned to their states?

[Fazel] It is natural for the POW's to be handed over to their states.

[Al-Faqiyy] Are there any Egyptians among them?

[Fazel] There were no Egyptians among the POW's captured by the Afghan Government, and no Afghan Egyptians have been handed over through the embassy in Cairo.

[Al-Faqiyy] Prior to the emergence of Mustafa Hamzah, the main suspect in the case of the attempt on President Husni Mubarak, you stressed that he was not on Afghan territory. How do you explain that contradiction?

[Fazel] Sudanese Foreign Minister 'Ali 'Uthman Tahir said, on the basis of the information available to him, that Mustafa Hamzah was in Kabul, but the Afghan Government denied it. If he is there — and I doubt it, despite the interview he gave — he must be in the areas under Taleban control.

[Al-Faqiyy] Is there a contradiction between the Islamic system in Afghanistan and the idea of holding elections to end the power struggle?

[Fazel] Rabbani's government is for elections, but a number of party leaders, including Mohammad Yunus, and the Taleban movement reject the election principle, on the grounds that it does not exist in Islam and that the ballot box could bring corrupt people to power. This is their justification for their rejection of the elections.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh: President-Elect 'Will Try To Maintain Neutrality'

BK2807122396 Dhaka THE DAILY STAR in English 24 Jul 96 p 1, 12

[By staff correspondent]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President-elect Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed has said he will try to maintain neutrality of the office of the Head of State.

"I will try to maintain neutrality of the office of the President," Justice Shahabuddin said while talking to newsmen at his Dhanmandi residence yesterday hours after the Election Commission declared him elected unopposed President of the country.

He, however, refused to say anything about the policies of the government saying, "Still there are two months fifteen days to go for my swearing in to the office."

The Election Commission through a gazette notification yesterday announced that Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed had been elected unopposed President of the country according to Article 7 of the Presidential Election Act, 1991 and sub clause 6 of clause 12 of the Presidential Election Regulation 1991.

The ruling Awami League had nominated him as its candidate for the presidency with no other contestant from the Opposition.

Justice Shahabuddin will replace President Abdur Rahman Biswas whose tenure expires on October 8.

A former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed had also headed the caretaker government which conducted the 1991 general elections. The 1991 election was acclaimed nationally and internationally as a free and fair one.

"There was no precondition from any quarter," Justice Shahabuddin said about his nomination for the post of presidency. He, however, said that he would have been more happy if his nomination papers were signed by both the major parties in the country.

Justice Shahabuddin said that he accepted the offer of the ruling party for the sake of upholding the democratic system. "In the parliamentary system there has to be a President. Otherwise, it ceases to exist."

Citing examples from other Commonwealth countries where parliamentary democracy is practised, Justice Shahabuddin said, "after election to the post of President, a person ceases to remain a party man."

In this context, he gave reference of India saying that during the last 48 years, party men were elected President but they never retained the party membership after election.

The President-elect stressed that the political parties in the country should develop the political culture of accepting peoples' verdict and hoped that the parties would reach a consensus on major national issues.

When his attention was drawn to the fact that the office of the President did not enjoy executive powers in a parliamentary system, he said that he was aware of it.

"It is the legislators who are to look into it," he said when asked whether he thought that the powers of the President should be enhanced.

Justice Shahabuddin said that under the existing system, the President can advise the government on all important national issues. He hoped that the government would consider it with due importance.

When asked about former president H.M. Ershad who was sent to jail during his tenure as Acting President, Justice Shahabuddin said that he was happy that Ershad was elected to the Jatiya Sangsad [Parliament]. Law will take its own course regarding the cases against Ershad, he said.

Bangladesh: Finance Minister Presents 1996-97 Budget

BK2807170096 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 1600 GMT 28 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The national budget for the 1996-97 fiscal year was presented in the Jatiya Sangsad [Parliament] this afternoon. The new budget envisages an estimated revenue receipt of 17,120 crore taka and revenue expenditure of 12,103 crore taka, leaving a surplus 5,017 crore taka. The size of the proposed Annual Development Program [ADP] stands at 5,500 crore taka, 47 percent of which will be financed from internal resources. The growth rate of Gross Domestic Product is estimated to rise to 5.5 percent in the first year and to 7 percent in the next five years.

Announcing the budget, Finance Minister Shah A.M.S. Kibria said the allocation in agriculture sector has been raised by 34 percent in view of its special contribution to the economy. An amount of 748 crore taka has been proposed for agriculture sector during the current fiscal year. The growth rate in the sector has been projected at 6 percent. An agriculture subsidy fund of 100 crore taka has been created. Banks will be provided with this money to subsidize [words indistinct] credit for purchase of irrigation equipment and other farm machinery. An increase of 36 percent in the ADP allocation has been stipulated in the water resources sector. An amount of 1,025 crore taka has been allocated for this sector.

The restrictions of [words indistinct] to attract more investments from abroad. A quota of 5 percent for Nonresident Bangladeshi [remainder of item indistinct].

India

India: Prime Minister Gowda Condemns Atlanta Bomb Blast

BK2707154596 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 27 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] A bomb blast rocked the Olympic city of Atlanta today, killing at least two persons and injuring 110. [passage omitted]

Several world leaders, including India, have condemned the bomb blast in Atlanta. The prime minister has expressed shock and grief over the explosion. In a message, Mr. H.D. Deve Gowda expressed sympathy for those who suffered in the blast. He said the continuation of the games will send a clear signal to the terrorists that they cannot succeed in their disruptive activities.

India: Atlanta Terrorism Seen as Challenge to U.S. Government

BK2807101996 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 28 Jul 96

[Commentary by Professor R. Narayan]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] With the medal tally of 16 gold and 18 silver for the American athletes at the Atlanta Olympics, Friday [26 July] was indeed a day of great rejoicing for the United States. Tragically, though, that rejoicing was short-lived for past midnight that Friday dismay and confusion descended over Atlanta. Tragedy struck the Olympic centennial entertainment park in central Atlanta, where a pop music concert was in progress when an explosive device went off killing two and injuring more than a 100 revelers inside. Mournful but undaunted, the International Olympic Committee has announced that the rest of the scheduled events of the super Saturday [27 July] will continue uninterrupted.

The tragedy that struck Atlanta is the second such sordid incident in the history of modern Olympics. The first occurred in Munich in 1972 when more than a dozen Israeli athletes were ambushed and killed by terrorists. It is premature to say anything definitely about the Atlanta incident. By all accounts, security arrangements have been at the best. So much so, it is claimed that no untoward incident has occurred in the official area of the Olympic games. Even at the entertainment area, it is claimed, minutes before the explosion the security had already detected the explosive device. Be that as it may, the Atlanta tragedy cannot be dismissed as an isolated event of terrorism.

In recent years, the United States has been a mute witness and a major victim of a series of terrorist violence both within and outside of its borders. Hardly a week ago, an American jumbo jet TWA crashed in the Atlantic Ocean shortly after takeoff from New York, killing all on board. Latest investigations attribute the crash to a bomb explosion. A month or so ago, the residential complex of U.S. military personnel in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia was the target of yet another bomb explosion. And, a year ago occurred the worst tragedy, where in the remote Oklahoma City a powerful detonation ripped through a huge building complex killing hundreds of civilians including children. All these happened in quick succession after the New York City Trade Center building going ablaze.

Although organized terrorist attacks on targets within the United States have been relatively rare in the past, these limited incidents have often been attributed to overseas terrorist organizations. But things have changed, since specially the Oklahoma City incident, when fingers were pointed to home grown terrorist organizations. What has sown seeds of domestic organized terrorism is a new challenge that successive American governments will have to face. In doing so, perhaps, the United States will be able to formulate more meaningful policy initiatives based on rigorous and critical self-introspection to meet the problems of organized terrorism.

India: Gujral 'Not Averse' To Talks With U.S. on Nuclear Issues

BK2907110896 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English 29 Jul 96 pp 1, 9

[Report by Nirmala George]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India and the United States are likely to begin bilateral discussions on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and nuclear issues soon.

External Affairs Minister I.K. Gujral told The Indian Express today that India is not "averse" to talks with Washington on all issues including nuclear matters.

"Basically what the Americans are saying is abstain (from the vote on CTBT), and let it go through," says Gujral. "What we are saying is we don't want to sign the treaty. Without addressing our concerns what option does it leave us with?"

"We are not averse to discussing anything and everything with the United States, including the CTBT," he said. However the level and parameters of the bilateral talks would be decided shortly, he said.

The earlier rounds of Indo-US talks on arms control came to a grinding halt around mid-1994. India and the US had held four rounds of bilateral discussions on nuclear-proliferation and regional security during the period 1992-1994.

But the discussions abruptly ended following the fiasco of the London Talks held on the eve of then Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's visit to Washington in May 1994. Once again the point of contention was the difference in perception between the two countries.

While the US set its sights on a regional arms control regime, India sought to locate any such move within the overall efforts at global disarmament.

The impasse on arms talks have continued in the years that followed. While senior arms control officials of the Clinton Administration were keen to visit India this year, New Delhi successfully blocked the moves.

The US State Department spokesman, Nicholas Burns, on Thursday [25 July] announced that the US would continue its "private discussions" with the Indian government with the intention of "persuading" it to let the CTBT pass.

The US is said to be also using other great powers like Russia to put pressure on India not to block the passage of the CTBT when negotiations resume in Geneva tomorrow.

India: BJP Leader Opposes Draft CTBT

BK2707103096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 27 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The leader of the opposition in the Lok Sabha, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, has opposed the draft CTBT [Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty] and urged the Indian delegation to block its passage to the UN General Assembly. In a statement in Bangalore today, he said the CTBT in the present form does not eliminate nuclear weapons in specified framework. He said the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] will not accept nuclear apartheid.

India: CTBT Must Not Be Linked to 'Overt Weaponization'

BK2607151996 Delhi THE PIONEER in English 26 Jul 96 p 9

[Report by D. Shridhar]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] There is a great debate in the country about the second phase of the CTBT [Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty] act. There are growing calls, many of them clearly jingoistic in nature, that with India holding firm on not signing the CTBT in its present form, we should either formally declare ourselves as a nuclear weapon state or begin conducting explosions.

This automaticity that is being injected into the nuclear debate — between an international position that the country has taken on a clearly flawed treaty and a tactical decision of testing is most unfortunate.

First, the CTBT debate is far from over. Although the 28 June deadline was breached because of the failure of the remaining countries participating in the deliberations of the ad hoc committee on a Nuclear Test Ban, the issue is far from over.

For one thing, the adjourned session resumes on 29 July and there is great speculation on the course of action that will be adopted by the P-5 countries. Theoretically, two options exist. Firstly, since Jaap Ramaker's draft treaty text was circulated to all participating countries on 28 June for consideration by the capitals of the participating countries, further negotiations could continue. While the G-21 countries will be expected to plug this line, with support from China, Pakistan and Russia, there is every likelihood that the Western group will resist such moves, for the fear of it unraveling the draft text as it stands. The second possibility is that with the Western group pressing that the draft text be taken as a take it or leave it measure, here is a growing possibility of taking the issue into the wider forum of the General Assembly to break the deadlock in the CD [Conference on Disarmament].

For India, both issues have considerable importance. In the Ramaker draft, we continue to remain part of the international monitoring system of the treaty, despite our making it clear to the president of the CD in very unambiguous terms that our names should be deleted from these lists. Secondly, if the Ramaker draft finds itself in the General Assembly and is voted upon, the treaty could open for signature, with an entry into force provision that is wholly dependent on India.

To that extent, our engagement with the CTBT is not over as yet and we would require to marshal all our forces in the coming weeks to ensure that we have nothing to do with a treaty that does not meet with any of our minimum concerns.

While we have not extricated ourselves completely from the CTBT issue, there has been a noticeable tendency amongst security analysts to push for overt weaponisation, with or without testing. This issue needs to be thought carefully before embarking on a course of action from which there might be no retraction.

Our nuclear ambiguity was broadly supported by these security analysts for a number of years, and therefore their making these recent demands is difficult to comprehend. The situation today is not similar to that of China, which has become the latest role model for New Delhi when reacting to international issues.

If China can afford to derive maximum mileage from this strategy, it is because it is an acknowledged nuclear power. In the case of India, making the move from undeclared to declared, would require to factor in many side effects that could result from the action. For starters, it would be pertinent to look back to 1971, as well as possibly explore as to why Mrs Indira Gandhi stopped so abruptly in her tracks after Pokaran.

Material conditions may have changed in the past 22 years, but a hint of the type of pressures that might have been exerted on us in that period would be instructive when making up our minds in the immediate future. The U.S. which has already said that while it is ready to live with India not signing the CTBT despite all persuasive efforts, will however not be prepared to tolerate a nuclear testing programme.

In an instructive report prepared by Dr Raja Ram Anna's National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), the economic pressures which could be mounted on us have been discussed. The report states that 11 percent of the total aid comes from six European countries and the U.S.

If the World Bank is added, where the U.S. enjoys the advantage of weighted voting, the percentage shoots up to 98 percent.

The situation, which the report claims has improved in the past few years, has been mainly due to exports, which again go in large measure to the developed world.

But the report appears optimistic that with the right mix of political lobbying by MNCs [Multinational Corporations] in Washington and other Western capitals and increasing the attraction of India as an investment target, much of the economic pressures can be warded off. Here again, the report basis itself on the India-China relationship.

But the similarities are skewed because, as the reports itself states that for every $1 million that India receives in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), China gets $94.5 million.

Similarly, the total quantum of Chinese two way trade with the U.S. and Europe is huge and therefore can play the same card as the West with telling effect. India in the present situation, just does not have that kind of clout to rely upon.

In such a situation, the exercise of the nuclear option is linked to wider policy issues. We need to ask ourselves whether in the event of exercising the option, we are prepared to pay whatever costs are deemed necessary. The Chinese through the long years of international isolation showed that they were prepared to do pragmatic deals but at the same time signal that any pressure on their fundamental interests could be safeguarded through the will to go it alone. This is one issue tat would need to be examined closely before the government embarks on the issue of overt weaponisation.

Linkage to the CTBT is wholly unjustified and government would do well to ensure that this linkage is not encouraged.

India: National Security Implications of Satellite Projects Viewed

BK2707134496 Delhi THE PIONEER in English 27 Jul 96 p 1

[Report by Naresh Minocha]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Citing security reasons, the Defence Ministry, supported by Intelligence Bureau and Research and Analysis Wing, has put its foot down to scuttle the upcoming $800 million Afro Asian Satellite Communication (ASCOM) project of Essel (Zee TV) and Essar groups.

The Defence Ministry has warned the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) that ASCOM would endanger the working of defence battle communication network as both the systems would use the same radio frequency bands.

The ministry has categorically said that the two systems cannot co-exist.

Hinting at the generic threat to the national security posed by such satellite-based global cellular mobile telephone projects, the Ministry has stressed the need to monitor such networks.

ASCOM and other such upcoming global projects will have the capability to provide cellular telephone, radio-paging, fax and other value-added services to subscribers. During the war, these facilities can prove handy to the enemies and their spies.

Defence telecom experts say these upcoming projects will increase the challenge of monitoring and intercepting the messages.

It is apparently because of such risks that China has rebuffed offers from promoters of such projects for developing and launching satellites as quid pro quo to giving access to Chinese telecom market.

The ministry's emphasis on monitoring implies that two other approved satellite-based cellular telephony projects, Iridium and I-CO, will need to be reviewed from the angle of national security.

The Department of Space has also thrown its weight behind the Defence Ministry by demanding a policy for evaluating such projects.

It has told the PMO that licensing of private satellite telecom services is not a matter of communications alone. It has a bearing on space industry and national security, too.

Realising that there are several futuristic global satellite based mobile communications projects eying Indian market, the Space Department has prepared a policy paper on this subject for inter-ministerial discussion.

The department's considered view is that the Government should frame a clear-cut policy in evaluation of applications seeking access to Indian market as these satellite systems will turn out to be lame-ducks without connectivity to Indian telecom networks including terrestrial cellular telephone systems.

Confirming that a storm is building over ASCOM and other such projects, sources in Sanchar Bhavan say that Department of Telecommunications (DOT) cannot be held responsible for clearance of such projects. It was for Mr AN Verma, Principal Secretary to former Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao, to seek the views of Defence and Space authorities in his capacity as Chairman of Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB).

FIPB first cleared the Motorola-led $ 4 billion Iridium project in 1994. The Indian investment in Iridium Inc. was separately approved by the Committee on Overseas Joint Ventures under the aegis of Commerce Ministry. Iridium project, comprising 66 low-orbiting satellites providing global coverage, came up twice before FIPB and twice before this Committee.

On all these occasions, the Defence and Space departments were not consulted.

In the case of second project, ASCOM, FIPB cleared the project twice without caring to consult these two departments. First, the project was approved as an application from London-based ASCOM Ltd for setting up a joint venture to produce telecom. equipment and provide management and marketing of mobile telecom services in India. Towards 1995-end, FIPB approved a joint venture between Essar Telecom and ASCOM (Gibraltar) Ltd for marketing and distribution of services under the name OBSIDIAN in the country and abroad.

The third approved project provides for equity participation by Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited in INMARSAT's global satellite-based cellular telephony project named I-CO Global Communications. Other such projects that want to provide services in India and thus require Indian Government's approval include Globalstar and Odyssey.

The trouble for ASCOM started in late 1995 when it approached FIPB seeking changes in the first approval.

The proposed changes include owning and operating geo-synchronous satellite by the Indian joint venture promoted by ASCOM and altering the name of the service from Obisidian and Agrani.

An intelligent joint secretary in the Industry Ministry, who was earlier instrumental in leading FIPB to carefully scrutinise Pepsi's controversial investments in India, felt uneasy at the fundamental changes in ASCOM joint venture.

He thus advised PMO that ASCOM should be viewed in its totality. He suggested that Defence Ministry and Space Department should be asked to comment on the project. Mr Verma had then no option but to seek the views of these two strategic departments.

ASCOM project hit headlines in January 1995 during the visit of late Ronald Brown, US Commerce Secretary when Essel group signed agreement with Hughes Communications International of the US for developing satellites and certain other equipment for the project.

ASCOM project will comprise two or three satellites, ground control equipment, gateway exchanges for routing the calls and subscriber equipment.

Iran

Iran: Foreign Ministry Spokesman Condemns Atlanta Bombing

LD2707201296 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1950 GMT 27 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Foreign Ministry has condemned the explosion in Atlanta's central park and conveyed his sympathy to the families of the victims of the incident. Mahmud Mohammadi said that the Olympic games were a symbol for human relations between nations and constructive rivalry between athletes. He said that such acts of terrorism against innocent people were inhuman and unjustifiable.

Iran: Tehran Radio Condemns 'Terrorist' Atlanta Bombing

LD2807095896 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0350 GMT 28 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The terrorist incident of a bombing in the central park in Atlanta during the Olympic Games, which resulted in dozens killed or injured, has been condemned by various countries around the world, including the Islamic Republic of Iran. On this issue, a spokesman for the Foreign Ministry of our country described the Olympic Games as a symbol of human relations between nations and constructive competition between athletes and, while condemning such terrorist acts against innocent people, described it as an inhuman and unjustifiable act.

The reality is that the perils of such terrorist acts and blind terrorism can endanger innocent ordinary people in any community. Therefore there is a need for concerted global effort to confront them. Moreover, this reality must be born in mind that U.S. society, for its own particular reasons, has for some time been witnessing such terrorist incidents whose domestic sources have become clear. The bombing incident in the federal police headquarters in Oklahoma, the explosion of the TWA airliner and, eventually, the bombing incident in Atlanta while athletes and sports correspondents from more than 190 countries were competing within a friendly framework, is one of those incidents that have been happening in the United State for over a year and have created an atmosphere of terror among the people of that country.

However, the occurreace of such an incident on American soil for the first time has brought to the attention of security officials and Washington's foreign policy authorities the depth of the tragedy which can bring perils to any place at any time. That has had a profound effect on the stances of U.S. officials so that they do not attribute any violent and terrorist act to sources outside their country and direct their attention to their own domestic social problems which are the springheads of these terrorist acts.

The noteworthy point, however, is that the bombing incident in Atlanta and the discovery of two further devices in the area — which have come about despite the stringent and unprecedented security measure — demonstrated that such security arrangements will not be able to prevent these incidents by themselves.

Iran: KDP Radio Reports Iranian Forces Clash With KDP in West

LD2707132696 Tehran IRNA in English 0702 GMT 27 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sanandaj, Kurdestan Prov., July 27, IRNA — The armed members of the dissolved Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) escaped unhurt after a heavy armed encounter with the Iranian forces in western Iran, the KDP radio reported on Thursday [25 July]. The radio added that the KDP forces on July 16 became engaged in a fierce encounter with the Iranian forces while penetrating into the Iranian territory in 'Kargar Olia' village, western Iran. The radio claimed that in the clashes which lasted 40 minutes a number of Iranian forces were killed adding that bodies of two were left in the scene the report also claimed that the KDP forces returned to their basis inside Iraq with no casualties. Official sources in the area refrained from denying or confirming the KDP claim.

Iran: Kurdish Insurgents Kill Villager in Maysurab

LD2607202696 Tehran IRNA in English 1407 GMT 26 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sanandaj, Kordestan Prov., July 26, IRNA — A local source said here today that unidentified gunmen associated with the outlawed Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) had ambushed and killed a villager in Maysurab village in this province early Friday [26 July] morning. The victim was Hasan Javaheri, 50. The radio of outlawed KDP has kept silent on the news, and local sources said the incident was being investigated.

In a previous broadcast on June 29, the radio had said that members of KDP had killed another villager near Sardasht because he supported and cooperated with the central government.

Iran: IRNA Reports KDP Forces Cross Iraqi Border, Attack Villages

*LD2807084896 Tehran IRNA in English
0750 GMT 28 Jul 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sanandaj, Kurdistan Prov., July 28, IRNA — The military forces of the dissolved Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) Sunday [28 July] morning after crossing Iraq-Iran border attacked several border villages in Western Iran, according to a border guards commander here.

The KDP forces were forced to retreat by the Iranian border guards, he added.

In the light of the recent increased movements and activities of the KDP forces in the area, such operations were expected and, therefore, the Iranian border guards are on alert to repel any attack, said the commander.

He declined to give any further detail and the casualties suffered by the KDP invaders. He, however added that more information will be released later.

The KDP radio in a report last Wednesday [24 July] night claimed that its forces had killed two Iranians and wounded three others.

Meanwhile, a local source said last Friday [26 July] that in the attack of the forces of the outlawed KDP a villager named Hassan Javaheri was martyred.

Iran: Iranian Troops Shell Rebel Positions; 'Officials' Cited

*NC2807105596 Paris AFP in English
1048 GMT 28 Jul 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, July 28 (AFP)—The Iranian army shelled positions of Iranian Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq on Sunday [28 July] to retaliate for the guerrillas' cross-border attacks, Iran's official news agency IRNA reported.

An army official told IRNA that "considerable damage" was inflicted to the positions of the "aggressors" in Kurdish-controlled northern Iraq.

[In a related Irbil-datelined report, Paris AFP in English at 1049 GMT on 28 July adds the following: "A total of 2,000 Iranian troops launched an armed offensive 50 kilometers (30 miles) inside northern Iraq against Iranian Kurdish guerrillas, officials here said Saturday [27 July]. The Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan officials said their camps near Koysinjaq [name as received] were shelled early Saturday, without giving details of any casualties."]

Iran: IRGC Commander Says KDP Attacks Repelled, Retreats to Iraq

*LD2807113096 Tehran IRNA in English
1045 GMT 28 Jul 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sardasht, W. Azarbaijan Prov., July 28, IRNA — The Iranian forces will continue to encounter the forces of the dissolved Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) until the aggressors are smashed, said a commander of the Islamic Revolution's Guards Corps (IRGC) here a short while ago.

Giving more details on today's encounters of the KDP insurgents with the Iranian border guards, the commander added, "several armed gangs composed of bandits, smugglers, and mercenaries of counterrevolutionary grouplets after crossing the border Sunday [28 July] morning attacked several border villages. In encounters with the border guards the insurgents suffered a humiliating defeat and fled to their bases inside Iraq."

The local commander also added that in a bid to repel the attacks of the insurgents, their concentration centers were shelled by long-range artillery and heavy damage was inflicted.

The KDP radio has so far made no mention of the Sunday morning attack of the counterrevolutionary forces in western Iran and the counterattack of the Iranian border guards.

The radio, however had earlier reported that two Iranian forces have been killed in the past two weeks by the KDP forces.

Iran: Kurdish Dissidents Report Iranian Attacks on Headquarters

NC2807142996 (Clandestine) Voice of Iranian Kordestan in Persian 1400 GMT 28 Jul 96

[Statement by the Political Bureau of the Democratic Party of Kordestan, DPK, of Iran, issued on 28 July—read by announcer]

[FBIS Translated Text] Dear compatriots, respectable people of Kordestan, freedom lovers of [words indistinct]:

The regime of the Islamic Republic [of Iran] has embarked on its treacherous plot to attack the DPK bases and the area where Iranian Kurdish refugees are being housed. It is also violating the borders of neighboring countries.

In the evening of 5 Mordad 1375, 26 July 1996, a several-thousand-strong force of the regime's [Islamic Revolution] Guards Corps [IRGC] armed with various heavy arms — such as artillery, Katyushas, and tanks

— entered Iraqi Kurdistan across the border at Marivan. On the same night, they reached al-Sulaymaniyah and set up a base in Salam. After [word indistinct] hours, this force started to move toward (Koysinjaq), where our party's political bureau is based. In the evening of 28 July it took up positions at strategic points around the area.

The aggressive forces of the Islamic Republic regime started heavy shelling of the party's headquarters at 0600 today, 28 July, as well as the camp housing the Iranian Kurdish refugees. The shelling is continuing. At 1000 today, a ground attack was carried out and heavy battles are going on now between the reactionary pasdaran and the party's peshmerga.

While revealing this savage attack, we call on all compatriots and political parties, as well as international organizations and forums, to strive by all possible means to stop the Iranian regime's assault and not to allow this crime by the antipopular forces to go unanswered.

[Signed] The Political Bureau of the KDP; 7 Mordad 1375, 28 July 1996.

Iran: Fighting Said Raging Around Kurdish Camps in Iraq

NC2807143996 Paris AFP in English
1404 GMT 28 Jul 96

[Report by Nigah Aram]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Irbil, Iraq, July 28 (AFP) — Some 2,000 Iranian troops have launched an incursion into northern Iraq to attack Iranian Kurdish guerrilla bases here, a rebel group said Sunday [28 July].

The Iraqi-based Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (DPIK) said Iranian soldiers armed with light and heavy artillery had pushed 50 kilometers (30 miles) across the border to attack rebel bases.

Iran did not confirm the intervention, but said it shelled rebel positions inside Kurdish-controlled northern Iraq on Sunday in a bid to halt cross-border attacks.

Tension on the Iraq-Iran border has risen in recent months, with Iranian troops massing in the northwest to counter Iranian Kurdish rebel raids.

Teymur Mostafa', a DPIK spokesman in the main northern Iraqi town of Irbil, told AFP: "Three days ago, 200 Iranian vehicles arrived with more than 2,000 Iranian soldiers loaded with heavy and light weapons."

Mostafa' said the troops crossed the border via the Marwin-Bahsmag post near al-Sulaymaniyah province and pushed on to Kou Senjaq, 50 kilometres (30 miles) south, late Saturday [27 July] before attacking the DPIK camps outside the town on Sunday.

"Now the fighting is going on in our bases, which are homes for our families and a hospital which is supported by foreign organisations," he said.

Salam 'Azizi, a member of the DPIK leadership, said the Iranian army was shelling the camps.

"The shelling started on our houses and the hospital at 6:30 this morning and now they (the Iranians) started the attack," 'Azizi told AFP.

"Several houses are burning, many families started to escape," he added, without giving details of casualties. Some of the families arrived in Irbil later Sunday.

"We didn't expect to fight the Iranian army inside Iraqi Kurdistan," he said.

Mostafa' said the Iranian troops had based themselves at Al-Salam camp belonging to the Iraqi Kurd group, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), for two nights before heading to Kou Senjaq.

A spokesman for the PUK confirmed the incursion but denied that the Iranian troops had based themselves in Al-Salam camp, saying they went directly to Kou Senjaq.

The official Iranian news agency IRNA said Sunday that Iranian troops shelled Iranian Kurdish positions inside Iraq on Sunday in response to cross-border raids.

"In a bid to fully repel offensives by the aggressors, their positions were targetted by long-range artillery shells" from Iran, an army officer told the agency.

"We will continue to confront the aggressors until they are completely suppressed," the unidentified officer added.

Earlier, an Iranian border guard commander told IRNA that his forces had repelled a DPIK raid Sunday on several border villages.

The commander, who was not identified, said his forces were "on a state of alert" because of a wave of recent attacks by Iranian Kurdish rebels.

Iran's northwestern border regions are the scene of regular clashes between security forces and guerrillas based in northern Iraq, which has been controlled by Iraqi Kurds in defiance of Baghdad since the end of the 1991 Gulf War.

According to Kurdish sources in Iran, Kurdish guerrillas have reinforced their positions in Iraq's mountainous border region.

The DPIK radio, quoted by IRNA, said the Kurdish rebels killed two people and wounded three others in an attack on Wednesday [24 July].

Iranian forces have several times in the past years launched air attacks or shelled Kurdish bases inside Iraq in retaliation for cross-border raids.

Iran, like neighbouring Iraq, Turkey and Syria, has a sizeable Kurdish minority, with an estimated two million Kurds and some factions waging an armed campaign for autonomy.

The DPIK was created in 1945, and along with the communist Kumaleh is the main Kurdish formation fighting the Tehran government from Iraq.

Its leadership was decimated several years ago by a string of attacks, including the assassination in 1992 of four of its top leaders in Berlin.

German authorities suspect Iran of being behind the 1992 killings but Tehran denies the charges. The DPIK is now led by 'Abdollah Hasanzadeh.

Iran: IRGC Commander Reports Eight 'Aggressors' Killed in West

LD2807150696 Tehran IRNA in English 1402 GMT 28 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sardasht (West Azarbaijan), July 28, IRNA — Eight aggressors were killed and several others injured by heavy artillery fire in the western border region of the country, said a commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) here today. He told IRNA that the operations of the Iranian forces which started after the hostilities of the anti-revolutionary elements in the western villages, will continue till the dispersion and mopping up of the concentration places of the outlaws near the Iranian borders.

The IRGC commander said that in view of the intensity of the Iranian artillery attacks, many more of the aggressors may have been killed. In related news, a local official told IRNA that the local people on learning of the retreat and losses of the outlaws, have expressed joy and called on the Iranian forces to avenge the blood of martyrs by continuing their suppression of the aggressors and outlaw elements.

The radio of the outlaw 'Democratic' grouplet in its broadcast from Iraq, announced that during its attacks on the western villages over the past 10 days at least two persons were killed.

Iran: KDP Leader Interviewed on Incursion Into Northern Iraq

JN2807172596 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1608 GMT 28 Jul 96

[Telephone interview with 'Abdallah Hasan Zadah, "leader of the Iranian Kordestan Democratic Party," by Salah Salamah in the Radio Monte Carlo studio in Paris—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Zadah] In fact, on the evening of 26 July, an Iranian force estimated at 2,000 armed men crossed the Iraqi border into al-Sulaymaniyah Governorate. The force remained in the al-Sulaymaniyah area in a camp called al-Salam overnight and left less than 24 hours later for the city of Kou Senjaq, the headquarters of the Kordestan Democratic Party [KDP]. Specifically, they headed to the area where the party's political bureau is located.

This morning, very heavy artillery bombardment began on the party headquarters and the Iranian Kurdish refugee camp. So far, there have been no military clashes between us and the Iranian forces, with the exception of one case, when they withdrew in front of the KDP forces. However, the artillery and missile launcher shelling-Katyusha [as heard] is continuing now.

[Salamah] But the PUK forces under Jalal Talabani denied that Iranian forces occupied al-Salam camp.

[Zadah] Of course the Iranian forces did not occupy the al-Salam Camp because occupation takes place by force. However, the Iranian forces entered the al-Salam Camp with the agreement of the PUK, not in the form of occupation. This means that they stayed there for one night and then moved on. PUK members accompanied them to the Kou Senjaq.

[Salamah] Iran accused you of conniving with the United States and Israel to destabilize the situation inside Iran. What is the truth?

[Zadah] This is an old charge. Regrettably, it is directed against all the free people in the region. Whenever one of the region's peoples demands their national and human rights, they level such accusations at them. We in Iranian Kordestan are a persecuted people, and we demand the minimum of national rights. There is no agreement between us and the United States and Israel. This is a total lie.

[Salamah] Do you cooperate in matters of fighting with other parties inside Iran, such as the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization or the Iranian Communist Party, for instance?

[Zadah] We have no cooperation, especially military cooperation, with any Iranian parties because the KDP is the only force that carries military actions sometimes. There is no armed struggle by any other party in Iranian Kordestan or in Iran in general.

[Salamah] There are reports that you receive military and financial assistance from certain states in the region, especially from Iraq. Are these reports true?

[Zadah] We wish they were true. We would like to receive material and military assistance from friendly countries, but regrettably, we have not received any material assistance from any foreign quarters. We would like to reiterate our call to international bodies to adopt a stand against the Iranian aggression against Iraqi Kurdistan, our headquarters, and our unarmed families. [end recording]

Iran: U.S., Israel Blamed for 'Chaos' in North Iraq

JN2907060496 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 0500 GMT 29 Jul 96

[Report by Muhammad Sadiq al-Husayni in Tehran]

[FBIS Translated Text] Informed sources here said the Iranian Kurdish opposition is using the rugged mountainous area under the control of Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani as a springboard for attacks on the Iranian forces. The radio broadcasting in their name is also transmitting from Iraq's Kou Senjaq, which is also under the control of Jalal Talabani.

Iranian political analysts link this Iranian Kurdish opposition activity and the fingers of accusation Tehran pointing to Washington and Tel Aviv, holding them responsible for the military and security chaos in the Kurdish triangle between Iraq, Iran, and Turkey with the aim of preventing these countries from solving their domestic and regional problems.

Iran: MKO Head Rajavi Condemns Attack on Rebel Kurds Inside Iraq

NC2907095996 Paris AFP in English 0936 GMT 29 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nicosia, July 29 (AFP)—The main armed Iranian opposition group on Monday [29 July] condemned an incursion by Iranian troops into northern Iraq to hunt down Kurdish rebels and vowed to support the guerrillas.

Masud Rajavi, head of the People's Mujahedeen [Mojahedin-E Khalq Organization, MKO], slammed what he called the "savage attack on Iraqi soil" against the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (DPIK) which he said inflicted "heavy material and human damages on this party."

"We are standing side by side by our Kurdish compatriots and brothers against this evil clerical regime," Rajavi said in a statement.

The Iraqi-based DPIK said Sunday [28 July] that 2,000 Iranian troops had crossed into Kurdish-controlled northern Iraq three days earlier to attack rebel bases.

It said the soldiers bombarded DPIK bases in Koi Sanjaq [name as received], 50 kilometres (30 miles) inside northern Iraq, forcing hundreds of Iranian Kurds to flee to the main town of Irbil.

Iran did not confirm the intervention but said it shelled rebel positions inside northern Iraq on Sunday, killing eight Kurdish rebels, in a bid to halt cross-border attacks.

"This is not the first time that the religious, terrorist dictatorship has taken advantage of the circumstances in northern Iraq and invaded the area to bombard and kill the Kurds and Iranian Kurdish groups," said Rajavi, whose group is also based in Iraq.

"The international community's silence towards these crimes has so emboldened the regime that it officially claims responsibility," he added, urging the Security Council to take an immediate stance on the attack.

Iraqi Kurds have controlled northern Iraq in defiance of Baghdad since the 1991 Gulf War.

Iran, like neighbouring Iraq, Turkey and Syria, has a sizeable Kurdish minority, with an estimated two million Kurds and some factions waging an armed campaign for autonomy.

The DPIK was set up in 1945, making it the oldest Kurdish rebel group.

Iran: UN Trying To Aid Refugees After Iranian 'Offensive'

NC2907102396 Paris AFP in English 0950 GMT 29 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Irbil, Iraq, July 29 (AFP)—UN officials said Monday [29 July] they were trying urgently to cope with 2,500 refugees, almost all of them women and children fleeing an Iranian offensive against Iranian Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq.

Officials with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in the northern Iraqi city of Irbil said they were holding an emergency meeting with other UN agencies and non-government organizations (NGOs) to try to help the refugees.

"They are in front of the office. We're just supplying water," one UNHCR official told AFP by telephone.

Relief agencies were now trying to provide them with shelter.

The Iraqi-based Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (DPIK) said Sunday [28 July] that 2,000 Iranian soldiers armed with light and heavy artillery had pushed 50 kilometers (30 miles) across the border to attack rebel bases.

Taymoor Mustafay, a DPIK spokesman in Irbil, said Iranian troops crossed the border via the Mareewan-Bahsmag [name as received] post in al-Sulaymaniyah province and pushed on to Kou Senjaq, 50 kilometres (30 miles) south, late Saturday [27 July] before attacking the DPIK camps outside the town on Sunday.

A UNHCR official in Irbil said an Iraqi Kurdish group, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, had told him that the fighting had stopped on Monday [29 July], but he could not confirm this.

Iran did not confirm the intervention but said it shelled rebel positions inside Kurdish-controlled northern Iraq on Sunday, killing eight guerrillas, in a bid to halt cross-border attacks.

Iran: Deputy Speaker on Iran's Military Capability

NC2607143696 Tehran RESALAT in Persian
17 Jul 96 pp 3, 15

[Interview with the Dr. Hasan Rowhani, deputy speaker of the Islamic Majles and secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, by an unidentified RESALAT correspondent in Tehran; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [RESALAT] What is the latest situation regarding the implementation of the provisions of [UN Security Council] Resolution 598?

[Rowhani] The clause pertaining to the cease-fire was implemented in 1367 [year beginning 21 March 1988]. Iraq was also compelled to accept and implement the clause pertaining to the withdrawal to internationally-recognized borders. A large number of prisoners were also exchanged and released by both sides in the first year after the war.

The most important provision of the resolution, which was considered a political victory for Iran, was the branding of Iraq as the aggressor. [passage omitted]

Clause seven of the resolution, which concerns reconstruction and construction of the war stricken areas has unfortunately not been implemented. In view of its current circumstances, Iraq does not seem inclined to implement clause eight, which is related to the security of the region, unless conditions were to change in Iraq.

[RESALAT] What stage have the Iran-Iraq talks reached regarding the remaining POWs of the two countries?

[Rowhani] Regrettably, the Iraqis are not prepared to cooperate with us bilaterally or to resolve this matter in the presence of the technical teams and representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross. On the basis of documentary evidence, we believe that there are still some POWs remaining in Iraq and we are willing to enter into negotiations with Iraq on the matter.

The problem lies in the fact that Iraq does not admit that a number of Iranian POWs are still on its soil. If it were to do so and agree to an exchange, Iran is prepared to resolve the issue within a week and to return the POWs to their homeland.

[RESALAT] In your capacity as the Supreme National Security Council [SNSC] secretary, what is Iran's current military and political position?

[Rowhani] One of the most important achievements of President Hashemi-Rafsanjani's government in the course of the First Five-Year Plan and part of the Second Plan was the reorganization of the armed forces and the strengthening of the country's defense structure. Today Iran is in the best possible situation militarily. However, Iran's military strength has never been a threat but defensive. We only stand up to and resist aggressors. We have never intended to commit aggression against any country and we have proved that in practice.

In the past few years some fundamental work has been completed in reinforcing our military structure. Our arms and equipment that were damaged during the years of Holy Defense [Iran-Iraq war] have been made up for by the purchase of modern equipment. Our country's ordnance industries have made noticeable progress in the past few years. Today, we have made considerable progress in the manufacture of weapons, missiles, and armored equipment; and the aviation industry and our military capability cannot be compared to what it was during the war.

Another important task that has been accomplished under the leadership of His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i was the revamping of the armed forces. This has been appropriately achieved by clarifying the obligations of the armed forces, the status of the armed forces and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, and the obligations and jurisdictions of the armed forces and the law enforcement forces. The armed forces' combat readiness has risen unprecedentedly in the past few years.

This level of combat readiness was quite evident in last year's IRGC maneuvers, as shown by the speed and readiness of the forces. The fact that the IRGC can transport 500,000 troops from all over the country to a specific point indicates the power and rapid deployment of the armed forces. All in all, I believe that as regards the armed forces, Iran is in its best situation either before or after the revolution.

[RESALAT] What has the Islamic Republic of Iran decided to do about the attack by the Turkish helicopters on our soil, which resulted in some of our compatriots being killed and wounded?

[Rowhani] The border areas between Iran and Turkey have always been peaceful since the revolution. However it is natural that in some cases minor problems may crop up. Iran and Turkey have a 500-km-long common border. Turkey is embroiled in quelling the dissident PKK group and has even attacked areas inside Iraqi territory for this purpose. To a certain extent it is acceptable for a country in pursuit of a specific group to commit an error while doing so.

As for the Turkish helicopters' attack on our soil there is a less than 1-km-wide No Man's Land along the border. At the start of the incident, Turkey's attitude was not very cordial and it did not accept responsibility for the attack, but later the deputy interior minister of Turkey came to Iran and studied and accepted our documents and reasons. It was agreed that an experts' committee should investigate the matter intensively; and today this task is proceeding very satisfactorily.

We believe that Turkey should admit its error and pay reparations and compensation for the loss in life and property and should apologize to the government and people of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The national interests of Iran and Turkey demand that our borders be frontiers of sincerity and friendship. Of course, Turkey's signing of a military accord with Israel was a reprehensible act that is quite unacceptable from our vantage point.

Iran: Velayati Interviewed on U.S. Sanctions, Mideast Role

LD2507183996 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 25 Jul 96

[Interview with Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati by unidentified correspondent on recent U.S. Congress measures and Lebanese developments; place and date not given — recorded]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] [Velayati] It is not the first time that the United States and the U.S. Administration have tried to pressurize Iran. Since the very beginning after the revolution, always they have tried to put pressure on us, so we have got used to it. And in spite of that, we have rebelled and reconstructed our country, in spite of a lot of damage that we had during the long war imposed against us. We have been very successful to rebuild and reconstruct our country.

One of the important elements which has been very effective in this connection was the independent policy of other countries, specifically the European countries. Now we can see that the EU has taken very firm position against the U.S. decision. We know that they are resisting and till now, fortunately, the European countries have been successful to prevent the United States to impose some position which is not to the benefit of European countries.

Their position about Cuba, that is to say the position of the European countries, was a good example and a good indication. They have shown to the United States that now the time has changed, and there is no more threat over European countries, like in the Cold War period. Now there are unified as European countries, 15 strong countries. They want to have their own independence and independent policy.

The same attitude the Japanese have, and also Canada. I mean six countries out of seven industrialized countries are against the decision of the United States.

So, I can tell you very frankly that the United States has failed in its foreign policy towards Iran.

[Correspondent] Mr. Foreign Minister: Now to some Middle East developments recently. What was Iran's role in the exchange of prisoners and bodies between the Islamic resistance and Israel? And how could this link be established between the two sides?

[Velayati] Iran has played a very important role. You know, Germany has decided to mediate between Hizballah and Israel for exchanging dead bodies and also prisoners of war. For doing so, they need...[pauses] they needed our help. That is the reason that since several months ago, the Government of Germany has been in close contact with us, talking to us to encourage us to do something for them in the Middle East. We also support a strong position of Germany in the Middle East. So, not only we wanted to help Hizballah and the people of Lebanon to receive the dead bodies of their people and also the POW's of the Lebanese to be released, also we wanted to give an important role, or to strengthen the position, the political position, of Germany in the Middle East.

This is the same as we did for France. You know, there was a big invasion by Israel for 16 days in southern parts of Lebanon. At that time, Iran played an important role. Politically and internationally, Iran tried at that time to defend Hizballah. And Hizballah won in that struggling. And we tried to strengthen the position of France, the French position, in the Middle East. And we have succeeded to achieve this goal. So now we are happy to see that Germany and France, as two important European countries which have friendly relations with Iran, are active in the Middle East.

Iran: Velayati Attacks U.S. Policies Against Iran

LD2707124696 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 27 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic Republic of Iran's Foreign Minister Dr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati says the United States is always seeking an opportunity in the region to mar Iran's constructive policies.

In a conversation with the Tehran-based daily IRAN, Dr. Velayati stated: The policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is constructive and stems from Islam. Those who are seeking to introduce Iran's foreign policy as a crisis-creating factor in the region are merely trying to strike blows on Iran, and as the world is witnessing, the Islamic Iran has practically proved the contrary.

Dr. Velayati pointed to the article published recently by the U.S. assistant secretary of state, Richard Murphy, on the U.S. illusion in policies toward Iran, and the realities of Iran's foreign policy as a testimony, proving that U.S. claims are baseless, saying that the most natural expectation from the United States is just these very claims.

Referring to the U.S. power-seeking and [word indistinct] behavior in the region, Dr. Velayati added that Europeans are opposing this and that is their motive of holding talks with Iran, which is the most stable and powerful country in the region.

Elsewhere in his interview, concerning the Zionist regime's policies in the region, Dr. Velayati stated that the Zionist regime has denied all its agreements with 'Arafat, and it only honors agreements which are to its own interest.

Iran: Commentary—Internal Problems' Behind U.S. Sanctions Move

LD2507231196 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 25 Jul 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] U.S. State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns on Wednesday 24 July termed the ratification of the bill on tightening economic sanctions against Iran a unanimity of Republican and Democrat representatives in the Congress. He also said: The U.S. Government is optimistic that, with the implementation of the bill, tougher measures will be carried out against countries known to sponsor terrorism by the United States. The U.S. State Department spokesman in his statements referred to allegations which had earlier been brought up by the United States as ploys justifying America's anti-Iranian measures. U.S. officials claim Iran to be a constant sponsor of terrorism and a country opposing the so-called Middle East peace process. However, the U.S. government has always fallen short of stating compelling reasons to its claims and merely attempts to force the international community to embark on a widespread movement in line with America's political tendencies against Iran.

The United States does this based on theories jointly manufactured by Washington and Tel Aviv. However, the U.S. has failed to have its goal materialize since it imposed sanctions against Iran last year. Now that the U.S. has started a new movement in this regard, the European Union intends to take countermeasures against the recent bill ratified by the U.S. Congress. This comes at a time when U.S. State Department spokesman, rejecting EU criticisms, has expressed hope that Washington will be able to eventually convince Europe to calm down. It goes without saying that the EU, as Iran and America's main trade partner, describes U.S. measures of imposing economic sanctions against Iran as a hardline decision, running counter to World Trade Organization laws and their economic interests.

We should say that what makes Washington to persist in such a policy is internal problems and competition ahead of the U.S. presidential elections. For officials in Washington are fully aware of the fact that their measures during the recent years have resulted in nothing but a series of setbacks, and with a step up in economic sanctions, problems of the future U.S. government will be redoubled, while White House officials are well conscious that negative aftermath of U.S.-EU differences over the sanctions will be inherited by the next administration.

Iran: Editorial Criticizes U.S. 'Encroaching on EU Sovereignty'

NC2607083196 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 18 Jul 96 p 2

[Editorial: "A Job Half-Done: The EU Response to the Helms-Burton Law"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The European Union should be given a pat on the shoulder for forcing Bill Clinton to put a six-month hold on U.S. lawsuits against foreign companies that do business involving American property confiscated in Cuba.

But the EU and other countries of the world know well that the relief is but temporary. Indeed postponement of the implementation of Articles III and IV of the Helms-Burton law means Clinton has not waived the said provisions but simply delays the right to bring suits under it for six months. In other words, the Clinton measure will only bar the U.S. temporarily from encroaching upon the sovereignty of the EU and other countries.

Though the EU has so far done a good job, much remains to be done if it is to succeed in bringing the U.S. to its knees by having the Helms-Burton law declared null and void. What it has accomplished so far is simply to protect its own rights vis-a-vis the U.S. law with extraterritorial effect.

Now the thrust of responsibility of the EU and other countries of the world should be to force Washington to waive enforcement of the main law that imposes the primary sanctions.

It is high time the U.S. realizes it cannot act as a "globocop," and that its legislature can only pass laws for Americans to adhere.

With the creation of the United Nations, International Court of Justice, World Trade Organization and several other international bodies world peace and free trade should not be at the whims of one single country.

Furthermore, it is a basic tenet in national jurisprudence that laws only have a territorial effect. The answer to the Helms-Burton law is to challenge the confiscation of American property, not to punish foreign companies that deal with them.

If laws are to be respected, they must be fair and must redound to the national good. [sentence as published] Political exigencies cannot take the place of sound legislation.

Clearly the Helms-Burton law is intended to boost Clinton's chances in the coming election and his decision to suspend it temporarily is proof that his government cannot withstand collective action. The EU and other concerned countries should not relax in their effort to bring the U.S. to scrap the broader law that imposed the primary embargoes unjustifiably. World peace and free trade cannot be put in jeopardy by those who have the will to do so.

Iran: Daily on Significance of Iran-Europe Dialogue at UK's RIIA

LD2507175196 Tehran IRAN in Persian 21 Jul 96 p 1

["London and Discussions" — editorial]

[FBIS Translated Text] Bilateral or multilateral discussions have a significant effect on the strengthening of global relations in the world today. The strengthening of relations between governments on the basis of mutual respect toward each others' policies, beliefs, and cultures, also has an important role in global relations.

The third round of discussions between Iran and Europe — held at the invitation of the "Royal Institute of International Affairs" [RIIA] and with the cooperation of research institutes from France, Germany, Italy, and Iran — created an appropriate opportunity for an authoritative exchange of views in a positive climate. The presence of experts and university specialists added to the value of the London roundtable.

These scientific and expert discussions started in 1994 on the initiative of Iran and Germany and on the level of university research experts and they are an opportunity to discuss various views regarding political, economic and cultural affairs regarding Asian and European peoples.

The London meeting was held free from common political deceptions and slogans and in it the possibility of rational and steady cooperation between Iran and Europe was discussed.

The talks included the following important issues: the means of investment and participation of foreign companies in Iran; and the expansion of cooperation between Iran and Europe in the fields of trade, finance, and energy.

Now, public opinion in Iran and Europe has understood that to abandon the field of rivalry to the Americans and to accept the consequences of an imposed "American logic" on global trade will only lead to "greater international uncertainty" and wastage of capital.

To keep the expert discussions free from the effects of the "American wheelings and dealings" is seen as the use of preventive measures in relations and the use of deterrence against global threats.

The continuation of discussions, free from bias or over-optimism, will prevent periodic trade wars as imposed by the Americans; and will prepare the economic capacities of the region, in the field of peace, and for "inter-continental cooperation" and stability.

Iran: Iran Still Seeking Release of Iranians Kidnapped in 1982

LD2507221396 Tehran IRNA in English 1922 GMT 25 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Bonn, July 25, IRNA — [Words indistinct] appeared on Wednesday [24 July] in the Frankfurt-based daily 'FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG,' called for the release of four Iranian diplomats who [word indistinct] held as hostages by Israel.

Musavian said [words indistinct] were the first victims of hostage taking in Lebanon.

"We have repeatedly asked the German Government to mediate in this regard, [words indistinct] adding that the release of the four [words indistinct] in 1982 has been Iran's primary demand.

FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG wrote that Tehran mediated between Hizballah of Lebanon, [word indistinct] the U.S., Britain, Ireland and France [words indistinct] who went missing in Lebanon.

Quoting Iranian sources the daily pointed out that the Iranian government in links with its [words indistinct] helped trace the westerners who went missing in [words indistinct].

"Iranians say we did whatever we could to help (find the missing westerners), but despite our frequent requests to the western government [words indistinct] in the status of the Iranian hostages in Israel," the daily concluded.

International circles have surprisingly remained mum over the fate of the [word indistinct] diplomats, who include the Iranian [words indistinct] Beirut Seyyed Mohsen Musavi and IRNA photographer Kazem Akhavan.

Iran: Vice President Habibi Signs Six Agreements in Bosnia

LD2707184196 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 27 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic Republic of Iran and Bosnia-Herzegovina have reached new agreements concerning the direction of their bilateral relations. The Voice and Vision of Iran's correspondent reports from Sarajevo on the last day of Vice President Habibi's visit to Bosnia.

[Unidentified correspondent] First Vice President Habibi's three-day visit to Bosnia-Herzegovina ended today with the signing of two memorandums of understanding and six agreements for cooperation in various fields.

The first memorandum of understanding, signed by Mr. Habibi and Bosnian Prime Minister Hasan Muratovic, stresses the need for the all-round expansion of ties between the two countries.

According to another memorandum of understanding, signed by the two countries' Central Banks, the two side's banking commitments will be guaranteed by the two countries' banks, and their exchange of goods will be undertaken using open market foreign currency [arze azad]. Iran and Bosnian have also concluded six cooperation agreements today concerning commercial; cultural, scientific, and educational fields; reciprocal investment support; road and air transport; as well as cooperation by the two countries' Chambers of Commerce.

According to the agreement for reciprocal investment support, besides paving the way for investment by private individuals and corporate bodies, the two countries will be guaranteeing and safeguarding their capital.

The cultural, scientific, and educational agreement facilitates the exchange of students, lecturers, and tourists, establishing cultural and sports festivals, joint scientific research, and carrying out cultural projects in the two countries.

Following the signing of the memorandums of understanding, Bosnian Prime Minister Hasan Muratovic, in a speech, described the results of Mr. Habibi's visit as positive and said: The implementation of job-creation projects was one of the most important parts of the two countries' economic talks. According to the agreement reached, $20 million from the credit allocated to Bosnia by Iran, will be invested in getting small factories started. The rest will be spent on infrastructural work.

First Vice President Habibi expressed his satisfaction regarding the bilateral economic talks, saying: With the implementation of these agreements with Bosnia we hope to witness constructive results.

Before the signing ceremony, Mr. Habibi met Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic. During the meeting, Mr. Izetbegovic, referring to Iran's experience in the reconstruction of areas devastated by war, said: We seek Iran's experience in that, particularly in the technical, industrial, construction, and iron foundry fields.

Mr. Habibi, briefing the president on the discussions carried out by the two countries' economic delegations and the agreements reached, said: The ties between Iran and Bosnia will be expanded in all fields, within regional and international dimensions.

Mr. Habibi also considered an all-round turn-out by the Bosnian people in the upcoming elections in that country to be a guarantee for safeguarding the struggles of the Muslim Bosnian people to achieve independence and liberty.

Bosnian Vice President Ejup Ganic, in his meeting with Mr. Habibi this morning, referred to the sensitive conditions in his country and said: We seek the expansion of our relations with the world of Islam in order to safeguard and strengthen our Islamic nature.

During this meeting, Mr. Habibi stressed the need for the Islamic states to support the Bosnian people and government.

After his three-day official visit to Bosnia and meeting that country's authorities, Mr. Habibi was officially seen off by Bosnian leaders. He is returning to Iran.

Iran: Chinese Envoy Notes Importance of Ties With Tehran

LD2707153696 Tehran IRNA in English 1158 GMT 27 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, July 27, IRNA — The U.S. economic sanctions against Iran have been a failure and today many countries have accepted expansion of their ties with Iran, Majles speaker 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri said here Saturday [27 July].

Hojjat ol-Eslam Nateq-Nuri, speaking to the deputy head of the foreign policy commission at the Chinese Peoples Congress Zhu Chi Zhen here said it was necessary for Asian countries to get united against the domineering powers of the world.

He added that Washington's meddling in the internal affairs of other countries were indicative of its aggressive and domineering nature.

The speaker said that the U.S., afraid of other countries becoming powerful, has always tried to throw obstacles in the way of developing states through various means.

Referring to the traditional ties between Tehran and Beijing, Nateq-Nuri called for further expansion of bilateral ties in various areas and underlined exchange of experience and information on the economic development of Iran and China.

Emphasizing further cooperation between Iran and China at the international community, Nateq-Nuri said that the upcoming interparliamentary session in Beijing would be a suitable opportunity for exchange of views and paving the ground for further cooperation between the two sides in various domains.

Zhu Chi Zhen on his part termed as 'significant' the cordial ties between Iran and China.

He said that Iran's Majles and the people's congress of China played and important and basic role in the political lives of the two countries and therefore expansion of parliamentary ties between the two countries was of special significance.

He underlined exchange of experience between the two countries in economic areas.

Iran: Kazakhstan's President Interviewed, Praises Iran

96LH0226A Tehran IRAN in Persian 25 Apr 96 p 2

[FBIS Translated Text] Political Group—The president of the republic of Kazakhstan announced: The Islamic Republic of Iran is a window on the world for Kazakhstan.

Nursultan Nazarbayev told IRAN's correspondent: The Sarakhs-Tedjen Railway, which is to go into operation on 24 Ordibehesht [14 May], will connect Kazakhstan and other nations in Central Asia and the Caucasus to the large markets in the Persian Gulf littoral area, the Gulf of Oman, and Europe by the shortest and most economical route.

He said: The Sarakhs-Tedjen Railway, for whose construction Iran performed a great engineering feat, is a new version of the great silk route.

The president of the Republic of Kazakhstan said: I will go to Tehran on 22 Ordibehesht [12 May] to take part in the ceremonies opening the Sarakhs-Tedjen Railway and to discuss bilateral, regional and world relations."

He said his talks with Iranian officials will deal with such matters as the shipping of Kazakhstan's oil to world markets through Iran, bilateral and multilateral trade relations, issues related to shipping and the free trade zone at the port of Ekta on the coast of the Caspian Sea.

Nazarbayev, speaking privately with our correspondent on Tuesday evening at the release event for his new book entitled *On the Eve of the Twenty-First Century*, said: Relations between Tehran and Almaty are always growing and expanding.

The president of the Republic of Kazakhstan devotes a chapter of his new book to his country's relations with Iran and Tehran's role in the political, economic, trade, cultural and social balance in the world and in the region. He writes: Iran, as a powerful and influential nation in the Caspian Sea region, has always been and is an important friend for us. We are confident that without looking to Iran one cannot be successful in cooperating in this sea. Nazarbayev added that Iran is one of the most influential and important nations participating in the region's economic and political affairs and in those of the Muslim world.

In continuing this chapter of his book, the president of the republic of Kazakhstan discusses his first trip to Iran in Aban 1371 [23 October -21 November 1992] and his talks with Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani. We writes: In those years they created so much propaganda about

Iran that I must say that minds were closed concerning this country.

He writes: "World propaganda had made the world anxious about what it read concerning Islamic fundamentalism, the Islamic nuclear bomb and the like, but in my trip to Iran, I saw that all of this propaganda was contrary to reality."

Continuing this chapter of his book, the president of the republic of Kazakhstan discussed his talks with Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Hashemi-Rafsanjani on his trip to Tehran, and recounted his visit with the exalted leader and his pilgrimage to the grave of the eighth imam, His Holiness 'Ali ibn Musa al-Reza (peace be upon him).

This book praises Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani's efforts to advance and elevate Iran, and it contains a photograph of Mr. Nazarbayev's welcome ceremony at Almaty Airport for Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani.

Iran: South Africa Opens Embassy in Tehran

96LH0202A Tehran IRAN in Persian 10 Apr 96 p 2

[FBIS Translated Text] Political Group—Yesterday, 18 years after the triumph of the Islamic revolution, the South African Embassy opened in Tehran.

In 1357 [21 March 1978 - 20 March 1979] after the triumph of the Islamic revolution, Iran broke off relations with the racist government ruling South Africa and made it one of its goals to support the struggles by the blacks in this country until a humane government was achieved in South Africa.

After Nelson Mandela won the elections for president of the republic in the South African Government in spring of 1373 [1994], political relations were established between the two countries.

At the ceremonies opening his country's embassy in Tehran, South African Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo addressed the ambassadors and foreign representatives in attendance. He said: Today a historic event is taking place in relations between the two nations, and I am very happy about it.

He expressed the hope that relations between the two nations will develop more than ever.

The South African foreign minister then gave an exclusive interview to IRNA's political correspondent. He emphasized: The two nations have many areas in which they can cooperate, and they must be used more than ever.

He said: A strong foundation has been created for cooperation between the two countries, and talks between the officials of the two nations will continue to make greater use of one another's resources.

He said: Iran can function for South Africa as a bridge for finding markets for Africa, and Cape Town also wants Iran to play a corresponding role for finding markets in the Central Asian nations and the Caucasus.

The South African foreign minister said: Cooperation between the two countries in the areas of oil and energy is satisfactory, but at the same time Cape Town wants further development of oil cooperation between the two nations.

In 1373 [21 March 1994 - 20 March 1995] Iran and South Africa signed a treaty to build a 15 million barrel storage facility for Iran's oil in the Port of Saldanhabaai in the western part of South Africa, valued at $13.7 million.

After this treaty was signed, the United States asked South Africa to ignore this transaction. Following U.S. pressure, South African officials announced that they would not allow the United States to impose its illogical demands on this country.

Mr. Nzo told our correspondent: South Africa will find its own alliances, and we give great importance to relations with Iran, even though the United States is opposed to this.

He added: On the trip to Tehran agreements were made about developing air relations between the two nations, and in the near future the South African minister of agriculture will come to Tehran to talk about agricultural cooperation.

'Abbas Maleki, deputy minister of foreign affairs, also spoke at this ceremony to open the South African Embassy. He said: The creation and development of relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and South Africa is due to the strategic and important position each nation has in its own region, and the many areas for cooperation between the two sides also have very high importance.

He expressed the hope that the joint commission on cooperation between the two nations will reinforce and develop bilateral relations as much as possible and that we will see better cooperation in this regard when the embassy officially goes into operation.

Iran: Daily on Human Rights, Democracy Violations in Algeria

NC2607083796 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 22 Jul 96 p 2

[Editorial: "International Bodies Must Avert Bloodshed in Algeria"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Algeria's President Liamine Zeroual concluded a series of talks with the leaders of the Algerian parties on the political future of that country this weekend.

The ruling junta, along with 12 other parties, agreed to set up three mixed-party commissions to prepare for a national political conference, a referendum on constitutional changes and legislative election to be held early next year.

Nevertheless, as it seems, the ruling junta in Algeria is not serious about putting an end to the bloodshed in that Muslim country for various reasons. The exclusion of the main opposition group, Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), from the talks points to the insincerity of the Algerian leaders. Besides, President Zeroual made it quite clear he was determined to keep the movement out of the country's political scene.

To properly judge the social status of the FIS in Algeria, it will help one to recall that, in January 1992, the movement would have won the second round of legislative elections if the ruling junta had not annulled the elections. Consequently, although resorting to violence is not approved of, the FIS has been forced to do so in order to uphold and restore its national rights.

Above all, those countries that shed crocodile tears for the people in Cuba, China and other parts of the world claiming those nations are suffering from a lack of democracy gave the green light to the Algerian ruling clique encouraging them to annul popular elections.

So far, some 50,000 to 70,000 people have been killed in Algeria since the annulment of the 1992 elections. It is clear that, as long as the Algerian leaders continue to ignore the FIS, that country will inevitably witness more bloodshed.

In other words, the decisions made by the Algerian government will not gain the support of the masses unless the people's true representatives, the FIS members, are invited to take part in the process of decision-making in that country.

Generally speaking, being allowed to elect their representatives is one of the fundamental rights of the people living anywhere in the world. Such a right has been clearly recognized and specified by the UN Charter. Nonetheless, adopting policies of double standard by the so-called patrons of the human rights is gradually becoming a common act.

The onus is on the international bodies, especially the United Nations, to bring the ruling junta in Algiers to their senses, forcing them to accept the vote of the people.

Iran: Minister Interviewed Concerning Infrastructure, Imports, Exports

NC2507105196 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 9 Jul 96 pp 6, 14

[Interview with Construction Jihad Minister Gholam Reza Foruzesh by an unidentified correspondent at KEYHAN's Tehran offices "last week"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [KEYHAN] The jihad movement emerged from the revolution and continues today. Is it the same today as it was in the first days of the revolution? [passage omitted]

[Foruzesh] [passage omitted] The jihad was formed with the help and capabilities of various able and disciplined managers who successfully complete any job assigned to them. We have completed our mission of development projects, such as potable water, electricity, and rural development. During the next three years almost all the rural development projects will be completed. With laws that have been specially compiled, we—the jihad—can continue to operate and work for the revolution. Since we are at the outset of the global revolution of Islam—thank God, our Islamic Revolution is extensive and ebullient—and since nothing with regard to the revolution has ended, revolutionary institutions will remain. [passage omitted]

[KEYHAN] Man always faces turning points, some of which can be analyzed and studied before they happen.

The Construction Jihad Ministry has been operating for 10 years. Has the jihad been able to add upon its revolutionary spirit in the new structure or does it feel it was more effective in its initial form? What is your assessment?

[Foruzesh] Imagine if the construction jihad had not become a ministry and had remained in its initial form. What would have happened? When the construction jihad was not a ministry, despite all the expectations and everyone's wish to help it do its job, nothing was done. Finally, the Ministry of Construction Jihad was formed. Had it not been formed the jihad would not exist now. What has preserved the jihad are sincere relations and the jihad elements' approach to the people. We have tried to preserve the jihad and to ensure the necessary facilities to carry out our duties. A construction jihad asset is its committed and expert manpower, which does what has to be done when it decides to do something.

[KEYHAN] Has a production strategy been compiled in the jihad sector? If yes, by whom? Do the country's high-ranking officials oversee this strategy? If none of these apply, what is the jihad doing?

[Foruzesh] We are not very experienced in compiling programs — because of the war and all the upheaval we have faced in the country. We compiled the first Five Year Plan, which was done successfully. We are now in the second year of implementing the country's second Five Year Plan for economic, social, and cultural development. In the first and second Five Year Plans we identified our weak and strong points. We have completed our statistical information and have been working on the basis of a plan. Plans teach us how to work collectively. A production strategy in agriculture and animal protein has been included in both plans. The jihad has its plans for every field. But you know we still lack the conditions required to implement plans precisely. But I say the jihad was ahead of schedule in the First Plan, because investments were largely made by the people. If the people see signs that the government is supporting production activities, they will welcome this. By extending facilities, such as banking and research and infrastructural activities, we attracted investors. We hope to do the same in the second Plan.

[KEYHAN] Your activities are linked with other ministries. For example, if a precise strategy must be compiled, the Ministry of Industries must be linked with the jihad. When they say agriculture and animal breeding should become the pivot of the country's development, why should the country's industries not tread the same path as the jihad?

[Foruzesh] The most important problem faced by our agriculture was that industry did not serve it. There was no production, but reproduction, in agriculture. In relation with this, joint meetings were held between the Water and Agricultural Council and the Industrial Council, and the representatives of these councils made some decisions on this. Fortunately this policy and these measures helped focus more attention on industry in the first Plan, such that today much of our investment is allocated to this field.

[KEYHAN] Minister, you have repeatedly mentioned our achievements in self-sufficiency in chicken and egg production. But we have seen these two food items being imported. If we have reached self-sufficiency in these fields, why are we importing?

[Foruzesh] Two years after the revolution 33 percent of our animal protein product needs were being imported for a population of 34 million. This fell to 18 percent later. Now we have a population of about 60 million. Our animal protein imports have dropped to 2.6 percent. And this is at a time when per capita meat consumption has increased from 21.2 kg in 1977 to 28.5 kg in 1995. Currently we are producing about 630,000 tonnes of chicken meat each year. Our output can be increased up to 900,000 tonnes. We produce 450,000 eggs but have a capacity of 600,000 tonnes. Eggs are not being imported now. Actually we are exporting eggs.

As for red meat, about $200 million of meat is imported each year. The per capita share is 2 grams. If we are granted credit facilities to fight a parasitical disease affecting 100 million head of cattle, we will achieve an additional 3 kg, which will be five to six times the total quantity of imports. [passage omitted]

[KEYHAN] For the umpteenth time it has been announced that cheese is not being imported. But we see the Qods Chain Stores in the cities and villages selling foreign cheese. Why?

[Foruzesh] The dairy industry in our country has never grown quite as fast as it is growing now. We are self-sufficient in cheese production and I assure you that in 1375 [year ending 20 March 1997] not 1 gram of foreign cheese will be imported. The country's cheese factories can produce the country's needs under hygienic conditions. I would never eat foreign cheese. [passage omitted]

[KEYHAN] There are sanctions on British, Irish, and other meat but rumor has it that Iran's major red meat imports are from Ireland. Please explain.

[Foruzesh] No meat from any contaminated country has ever been imported by Iran. Britain has never exported red meat to our country. Before mad cow disease we imported meat from Ireland on the basis of agreements and under very strict control and supervision. But the meat we imported from Ireland came from 18-month bull calves and had no bones. The cattle was inspected by Iranian vets and then slaughtered, packed, and shipped. More important is that mad cow disease was detected only in older cows, not in bull calves. In general our red meat imports from these countries have been halted. Britain has lost $30-$40 billion through the disease.

[KEYHAN] What about the construction jihad's activities abroad?

[Foruzesh] The construction jihad's major activities in Africa aim largely at teaching farmers how to use farming equipment and machinery. We have assisted the people in Ghana, Tanzania, Zanzibar, Sudan, and Sierra Leone, in activities such as sowing, cultivating, and harvesting, and in infrastructural activities such as water, roads, electricity, flood-prevention dams, irrigation, and fisheries. We also have an agricultural reconstruction program in Lebanon. [passage omitted]

[KEYHAN] Is the experience of the jihad workers used in other countries?

[Foruzesh] We export our know-how to many countries and have signed agreements within the framework of joint economic commissions with newly-independent [as published] countries like Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Sudan, Tanzania, and some other countries. We are placing our know-how at their disposal. [passage omitted]

[KEYHAN] Mr. Foruzesh, some of the hezbollahi and basiji children sometimes have some complaints to make about officials. I think that if what they say is true, then their criticisms are fair. They ask why our officials do not attend Friday prayers as they should? Without wanting to ask which group you belong too — to the group that does attend the prayers or to the group that does not attend them very much — what is the justification for not attending? Friday is a day off. Then why don't the officials attend the Friday prayers on their day off from work?

[Foruzesh] Usually the presence of officials on holidays and Fridays in Tehran is irregular. For example, apart from the few months that I was ill, I travel a lot on weekends. Usually Thursdays and Fridays are days that officials devote to travel. When are in Tehran, if we can, we do attend the Friday prayers, but not on a compulsory basis and first-row attendance. There is sufficient television coverage of the prayers. After all, Friday is a day that one would like to devote to himself. [passage omitted]

[KEYHAN] Since Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani's term as president is to end soon, how much do you think the cabinet will change? How will it change, and what role do you foresee for yourself in the new cabinet?

[Foruzesh] I think that it is a little too early to speak about this issue. I think that in our system, where we have the supreme jurisconsult and the leader of the revolution, changes on the level of the cabinet and Majles are ordinary changes without any extensive repercussions. Such changes may create problems in systems where there is no supreme leadership. I think that with the existence of the supreme jurisconsult and leadership, and with the relationship between him and the people, any government that comes to power will definitely be the best. Nothing will happen. It is extremely natural for there to be changes after eight years. I think that it is very good to use new faces. I am not volunteering to undertake any responsibility in the future government. I truly feel that it is better for there to be fresh thoughts. When a term in office is prolonged, those in office pay less attention to what the people around them have to say, because they themselves have been in that position for a long time and amassed all the information needed. Therefore, they consider there own views to be above all other views. [passage omitted]

[KEYHAN] America is threatening the Islamic Republic of Iran with [increased] sanctions each day. If this is implemented, will the jihad be affected?

[Foruzesh] I think that we, the Iranians, have two opinions on the American sanctions. One group condemns these sanctions, and the other welcomes it. I agree with one thing that America is doing: its sanctions on us. In other words, I fully support America's sanctions, because I think that the more America increases its sanctions on us, the more we grow and develop. In other words, we produce whatever America is not selling to us.

Therefore, not only am I not against the American sanctions on Iran, I am one of its supporters.

[KEYHAN] Many ask: Why are you waiting for America to boycott us for us to show our creativity? Why don't we do this ourselves on our own?

[Foruzesh] Fortunately, the jihad does not have that much to do with America. That is, basically our activities have not demanded that we do. And when they have, we have not welcomed it with a jihadi spirit. In other words, we have usually sought to ensure our own production. [passage omitted]

[KEYHAN] Which countries do you buy raw materials from?

[Foruzesh] From Third World countries. We usually deal with various countries. We are now trying to meet our needs from Muslim countries in the Third World, like the African countries, India, and China. We are replacing the Western countries with these countries, especially when some of the products that are sold to us by the West originate from African and other countries.

[KEYHAN] What the newspapers expect from you and your colleagues in the Construction Jihad Ministry is that you have more contacts with the mass media to propound existing problems so that the people's problems and difficulties will be discussed and steps taken to overcome them.

[Foruzesh] God knows that I always advise my colleagues to do so and I stress the importance of maintaining and increasing their relations with the mass media. [passage omitted]

Iran: Petroleum Minister on Future of OPEC

LD2507214796 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 22 Jul 96 p4

["Exclusive" Interview with Iranian Petroleum Minister Gholam Reza Aqazadeh-Kho'i by Touss Sepehr, OPEC Editor, member countries; date and place not given — Headline: "Resolving Issues Now Will Guarantee the Future of OPEC"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tehran — If OPEC can solve the challenges currently facing it — including those of Iraq's return to the market and quota in discipline — the organization's future will be assured, argues the Iranian Minister of Petroleum, Gholam Reza Aqazadeh-Kho'i, in this exclusive interview given to Touss Sepehr, OPEC Editor, member countries [title as received].

[Sepehr] World oil demand has grown by more than two million barrels per day in the last two years but most of that (1.7 mbpd [million barrels per day]) has been grabbed by producers outside OPEC. What can OPEC do to reverse this trend?

[Aqazadeh-Kho'i] In my opinion, non-OPEC countries have been notably successful in lowering their (production) costs. This has resulted in their accruing very high revenues in the past years, due to their use of (the latest) techniques. Consequently, the ground has been prepared for investments in non-OPEC producer countries, enabling them to absorb the increasing demand.

Of course, since OPEC is known as the residual supplier in the world, it has made sacrifices that have benefited non-OPEC producers. I characterize this attitude on the part of the organization as a sacrifice because it is OPEC's right to meet the new demand, as it has the additional production capacity.

There is, however, a limit to this forbearance. OPEC has done a great deal and now it is time to send the non-OPEC producers a message and begin to negotiate with them. OPEC must make clear that there is a limit to its tolerance. This current world trend should not continue.

[Sepehr] Is there a possibility of extending OPEC membership by focusing on the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union?

[Aqazadeh-Kho'i] Until OPEC has reached an international status and level of (disciplined) seriousness commensurate with its actual potential, I do not believe the absorption of new members would be of any value.

OPEC has to achieve a genuine global standing and no factors outside the organization can assist in this connection. OPEC members themselves play the most crucial role here. They should respect their own organization, its resolutions and assume an effective international posture in the oil market.

If OPEC seriously followed up these questions, we would witness their countries canvassing us for membership, since their interests would lie in being in the organization. OPEC, then, should engage in its own housecleaning process. This would allow others to approach the idea of membership positively.

[Sepehr] Is there any merit in continuing a producer/consumer dialogue?

[Aqazadeh-Kho'i] The underlying concept of this dialogue is very good. Unfortunately, it has got on the wrong tract in practice and not materialized: it simply reflects the views and opinions of each country involved.

The dialogue has not produced the results expected from it, which were to allow producers and consumers to meet and reach mutually agreed decisions. To date, every country is pressing its own agenda and viewpoints and this has hampered any real progress.

I believe that common ground should be established, culminating in decisions by consensus. This is the only avenue through which the dialogue can be successful.

[Sepehr] Do you thing there can be a coordinated OPEC position regarding the environment issue or would you prefer that this be limited to individual member countries?

[Aqazadeh-Kho'i] The environment question effects both the producers and the consumers. For example, Iran is one of the major oil producers and we have our own environmental problems. To illustrate our concern, we have even established an organization that operates under the direct supervision of the President. In recent years, increasing attention is being focused on this issue in our country.

One important point at the international level is to avoid contention and confrontation, in favour of (a spirit of) working towards sustainable global environmental solutions. What is at stake is no less than the quality of life on the planet as we know it.

It is merely repeating the obvious to say this is of immense international significance. To date, however, attention has focused on how to find the guilty parties in the environmental equation, as opposed to looking for solutions.

Everyone is busy trying to impose the cost of solving problems on others; attempting to find who will foot the bill rather than seriously searching for who might have the best solutions. We all should stop pointing the finger of blame at one another and instead, look for a common understanding, in order to achieve positive results.

[Sepehr] Some observers are sceptical about OPEC's long term prospects, its basic cohesiveness and the ability of the member states to abide by organizational decisions. What are your views on this?

[Aqazadeh-Kho'i] The future of OPEC hinges on rectifying the current situation. If we solve the problems now facing us, such as Iraq (re-entering the oil market), member countries' adherence to group consensus and quota violations, the future of OPEC will be guaranteed.

All these issues are inter-connected. If we do not get over these present obstacles, we will not get over future hurdles. Of course, recently we have begun to discuss and negotiate OPEC's future. At the experts' level, there has been a great deal of time and effort put into developing improved strategies for OPEC. Hopefully, we will have a very important report in this connection for the June ministerial meeting. If we resolve our internal problems now, the future will take care of itself.

[Sepehr] How do you see Iraq's return to the market?

[Aqazadeh-Kho'i] I welcome Iraq's return because this would solve one of OPEC's main problems. We need to resolve this issue very quickly. Iraq is one of the founding members of the organization and its return would solve one of OPEC's main problems.

[Sepehr] What does your experience as the top energy official of a major oil producing country and the longest-serving OPEC Minister, tell you about the future of the organization.

[Aqazadeh-Kho'i] OPEC is one of the most important organizations in the world with respect to the international economy. It has the potential for making an even greater impact but, unfortunately, we are preoccupied with internal problems. Consequently, OPEC's influence is commensurately reduced.

This is seen most clearly in the way oil prices are effectively set. The role of the paper market (energy futures) carries more weight, in this context, than either the producer or consumer countries.

Then too, consuming countries make a large profit margin on a barrel of oil than do producers. Oil sold at $18 a barrel will be resold by the consuming countries in the range of $60-$70/barrel. The real values of crude oil is going into the pockets of the consuming countries, not the producer. This is an unrealistic situation. The method through which prices are arrived at presently could lead to a major crisis.

Compared to other sources of energy, it is obvious that oil and gas are irreplaceable for decades to come. As a result, a durable producer-consumer paradigm must be established in order to guarantee supply and demand.

This should be linked to and balanced against the cost of production and the rates of investment. Several other parameters must be factored in to arrive at an equitable and sustainable, as well as a more stable petroleum market.

[Sepehr] There has been a major restructuring within your Ministry. How do you evaluate the overall performance of your Ministry as a result of these changes?

[Aqazadeh-Kho'i] The Iranian Petroleum Ministry has divided its activities into two major areas — upstream and downstream. We have four major companies dealing with oil, gas and petrochemicals, as well as refining, distribution and transportation.

These changes were implemented three years ago. The net result has been markedly improved efficiently. We also have plans for implementing privatization measures within the oil industry.

Our upstream activities — mainly exploration and production of oil — are handled by the National Iranian Oil Company. Other functions, particularly those related to services, will gradually be turned over to the private sector.

Iran has been quite successful in the field of petrochemicals. Our operations are efficient and compare favourably with international norms. Profitability is also high, as we have managed to maintain our production costs at very low levels.

Our gas sector is young but great strides have been in this area. Currently 270 Iranian towns and cities are benefiting from the domestic gas distribution network. Annual gas production is some 70 billion cubic meters. Half of this is being injected into the oil reservoirs and the remainder is for local consumption. With gas replacing some of our fuel needs and with the increase in the price of other fuel producers, we have been successful in limiting our consumption of fuel products. The last Iranian year saw a cut in consumption levels of some 100,000 barrels per day.

Another important policy of the National Iranian Gas Company is exports. It has signed substantial contracts with our neighbouring countries — Turkey, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Now we are talking with Pakistan. The first priority is to have agreements with neighbours, then we are going to develop the infrastructure to enable us to transfer gas to Europe and even the Far East.

[Sepehr] Has TOTAL been successful with the Sirri and South Pars fields? What is the status of the ten tenders offered for bidding in October?

[Aqazadeh-Kho'i] TOTAL's Sirri contract is now in force. In fact, to some extent, it is actually ahead of schedule. Thus it is clear that real progress is being made regarding the Sirri reservoir.

With respect to the South Pars field, we have received a number of proposals and these are under review. Contractors are still submitting bids.

As for the other projects, we already have a fixed timetable according to which preparatory work is moving ahead. In general terms, we have as variety as is the trend of development of these plans. Rather, on the contrary, we are quite confident as to the trend of these activities.

Iran: Need for Islamic Unity, Role of OIC Session in Tehran Seen

NC2307075796 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 10 Jul 96 p 16

[Unattributed commentary: "Islamic Unity"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the past few centuries unity among Islamic governments has become less tangible. A colonialist policy of discord and subservience, "indifference", ambition, and the suspicious nature of the political officials ruling over Muslim nations have pushed Islamic unity further away.

During the past few days the world's political-news circles — some out of concern and others out of interest — have been granting top priority in their news and analyses to the issue of unity between the Arabs and Iran. This issue requires a review of political developments in the Middle East during the past two months.

In the elections in the second part of Khordad [June] this year, Binyamin Netanyahu beat Shim'on Peres, the heir of the equation of land for peace. His 13-point plan increased Arab concern over the failure of the compromise process. The extremist Zionist prime minister stated his overt stances on the Middle East compromise process — most notably in articles referring to an independent Palestinian entity, withdrawal from the Golan Heights and Southern Lebanon, and an end to the construction of settlements. Again some Muslim political circles praised the Islamic Republic's anticompromise stance and called for a new definition of the Zionists' identity and objectives and the need to review Arab relations with Tel Aviv. Syria sincerely expressed its wish to strengthen resistance against the regime occupying Jerusalem. But Egypt's tactical game showed Cairo's disinterest in Islamic unity — the unity of a tactic against compromise. The comments by Egyptian officials at the peak of the Syrian foreign minister's sincere efforts showed that Cairo is not burning its bridges. These bridges connect it with Washington through one link—Tel Aviv.

The truth is that any distance between the Iranian nation and Egypt and the other compromising Arab governments stems from their closeness to the Zionists. This subservience led them to give up the Palestinians. This rule still applies. The closer the Arab governments move toward Tel Aviv, the further they distance themselves from Iran; the further they distance themselves from the Zionists, the more they can count on the Iranian nation's friendship.

The message for strengthening relations came from the direction of the Arabs. But ensuing events showed that they made this decision without consulting foreign advisers. Islamic Iran has shown the necessary goodwill in its support for the just positions of the Arabs and Palestinians on the Zionists. But this support should not deviate toward support for the compromise process. The wish for unity with the Arabs can only be assessed in line with the principle of resistance. But if some governments want a tactical and short-term unity to strengthen their bargaining positions in the compromise process, adhering to these positions will only mean participation in the treason against the Palestinian dream. The Arabs, who are competing with one another to adhere to the compromise process and who see peace as a mere mirage, but continue to attach hopes to Tel Aviv and to Washington, will only grant more concessions to Zionism.

Islamic Iran wants an untainted unity with the program and objective of resistance as its nucleus. Following the path of resistance means turning back from the wrong path of compromise. America and the Zionists are worried about Islamic unity. But Egypt's caution has put their minds at rest. As in the past, this is what continues to obstruct Islamic unity and this is what makes the compromisers — irrespective of which government they represent — more vulnerable.

Soon the new round of the Organization of Islamic Conference [OIC] session will be held in Tehran, which is the center and pivot of resistance. This conference will grant new opportunities for strengthening the idea of Islamic unity vis-a-vis international Zionism. If the Muslim governments come to Tehran with independence in their decisionmaking and with goodwill to solve the problems of the world of Islam, the OIC session can take a major practical step, contrary to the past.

Iran: Commentary on Ansar-e Hezbollah's Attacks

96LA0299B Tehran KEYHAN-E HAVA'I in Persian 15 May 96 p 6

[Commentary by Marizheh Sho'a'i of the News Division of KEYHAN-E HAVA'I]

[FBIS Translated Text] The alert presence of the people on the political and social scenes of the country is one of the inseparable foundations of popular and successful regimes. The people, through the timely announcement of their positions and proper criticism, can stop the officials of the country from stepping in the wrong direction, in the same way that success in serving on the overall level and the opportunity of having material and spiritual resources also is granted by the votes of the people to those involved in the affairs.

But some believe that the people have not yet acquired the necessary intellectual and cultural growth and political vision to express opinions about various issues of the country.

Such strong disrespect for and lack of understanding of the enlightened people, who by the steadfastness and unbeatable nature brought to fruition one of the greatest movements of the contemporary world, threw the monarchy with 2,500 years behind it into the trash bin of history, and established a new regime in accordance with the ideals of seeking Islam and independence, is shown by those who have separated their way from the path of the people.

In this discussion, we are not talking about such individuals, but we address those who, unaware and sometimes with good intentions, fuel the fire of those who oppose the power of the people.

What occurred on 16 Ordibehesht [5 May] in front of Qods Cinema in Tehran is an actual example of this claim.

On this day, based on the official announcement of the Ministry of Islamic Culture and Guidance, certain individuals who presented themselves as being affiliated with the "Ansar-e Hezbollah" group engaged in a fight with the officials of Qods Cinema in protest to the showing of the film, "The Gift From India," which resulted in damages.

Even though the Ansar-e Hezbollah group, in an admirable action of issuing a statement on 20 Ordibehesht [9 May], apologized for what had happened and even called the actions of those people "aggressive," still several serious questions remain.

The Ansar-e Hezbollah group said in the statement that this aggression has never been among the programs and goals of Ansar-e Hezbollah, and those individuals with the intention of instructing to do good and preventing prohibited acts wanted to stop the entry of individuals who had not observed Islamic standards into the cinema.

Also, addressing the high-circulation newspapers, most of which had reported the Qods Cinema incident almost identically, it states: The hostile newspapers that have problems, with the purpose of catching fish in muddy water, engaged in making a ruckus, forging news, and aggrandizing the event, with sinister intentions.

And now our questions:

1. The Ministry of Islamic Culture and Guidance is in charge of administering the cinemas in the country, and, according to the Ansar-e Hezbollah group in its statement, the officials of the Deputy Office for Cinema of the Ministry of Islamic Culture and Guidance are religious, intelligent, concerned individuals who protect the values of Islam and the revolution. Moreover, the proper authority for devising regulations for the entry of individuals into cinemas is the Ministry of Islamic Culture and Guidance. Given this, why have some people found it their duty to prevent the entry of clients into the cinema? Do such actions not harm the place of the legal institutions of the country?

2. Why did those who practice instruction to do good and prevention of prohibited acts make such a mistake, which a bit of forbearance and alertness could have prevented, and muddy the water so that, as they say, people who have problems can fish in the muddy water?

3. If the newspapers have forged the reports on this incident, why did the Ansar-e Hezbollah group not send a refutation to these newspapers, and why did it not, as is its custom, warn these hostile individuals who have problems by gathering in front of the offices of these newspapers?

What you have before you was written with the premise that the Ansar-e Hezbollah group is also a part of the Muslim people of the country and intend to make corrections. But this premise does not mean ignoring reactions that compromise the important and vital issue of the presence of the people on the political and social scenes.

Iran: Paper Subsidy for Press

96LA0277A Tehran RESALAT in Persian 24 Apr 96 p 2

[Report on interview with Mr. Ash'ari, deputy director for national press affairs, by unidentified reporters; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] **News Division—A subsidy for the press this year will be provided in the form of**

paper, and the press will have no paper shortage. Also, the zinc needed will be provided at about one-third the market price.

Mr. Ash'ari, the deputy director for national press affairs, made this announcement in an interview with reporters and said: Also, in order to increase the quality of the media, reporters will be given subsidies, and this support will be in the form of granting resources for professional travel to other countries for interviews with their officials and for training courses.

The criterion for the distribution of subsidies to the journals shall be based on the circulation, number of pages, number of pages of advertisement, level of production, and the richness of the content.

He added: These resources will be placed at the disposal of those who receive journalist cards from the Ministry of Islamic Culture and Guidance.

Mr. Ash'ari said: Since two years ago, journalist cards have been issued on a temporary basis for reporters who have taken part in the tests of this ministry. In the future, these cards will be permanent.

The deputy for press affairs of the Ministry of Islamic Culture and Guidance said: This year, in addition to the allocation of $50 million in foreign currency, R21 billion in subsidies, at the rate of 1,750 rials [R], is allocated by the government for the press and supporting the reporters.

Ash'ari added: Considering the evaluation of the Arak Press Festival last year and the reception of the people and officials of this festival, this year, in addition to holding the festival in Tehran, the Press Festival will also be held in the four provinces of Fars, Hamadan, Yazd, and Khuzestan at various seasons.

He added: Also, this year, Iranian press exhibitions will be held in four other countries, the first of which will be on 27 Ordibehesht [16 May] in India.

Ash'ari said: A symposium on ethics for Muslim reporters will be held in Tehran, inviting articles from the Islamic countries and our own country in this year, in Shahrivar [23 August-22 September], and writers of superior works will be invited to Iran.

He said: Since last week, the writing of a communication encyclopedia has begun with the establishment of a scholarly committee.

Mr. Ash'ari said: In the course of the press festival, roundtable discussions will be held, and one of the subjects to be discussed will be journalists guild organizations.

He said: In the course of the two press festivals, from last year to this year, the House of Young Journalists, the National Press Center for Providing Information to Scholars and Students, and the Center for Policy have been established.

Iran: Iranian Publications in Lebanon Viewed

96LH0190A Tehran IRAN in Persian 6 Apr 96 p 12

[Interview with Lebanese Publishing Official Musa Qasir]

[FBIS Translated Text] The following interview is an inquiry into the status of the publication and printing in Lebanon of religious and ideological books written by Iranian writers and thinkers.

It is worth mentioning that Musa Qasir, the director of the cultural group at Al-Huda Publications in Lebanon, provided a complete list of Persian books published in Arabic (127 titles), which could not be included because of space limitations.

Cultural Group

[Question] When did Al-Huda begin operating?

[Answer] We began our work in a scattered and weak way early in the Islamic revolution, but six years ago we formed our Translation Committee on the advice of the majority of the revolutionary clergy and supporters of the Imam's line in Lebanon, especially great men such as Martyr Seyyed 'Abbas Musavi, Sheykh Hoseyn Kurani, and Seyyed Hasan Nasrollah. Since that time about 25 translators, six or seven researchers and editors, and two to three writers have been working with us continuously.

[Question] What was your motivation for undertaking to translate Persian books?

[Answer] During the last 20 years the Arab nations have been oppressed by their governments. For this reason, during this period in these countries there has been effectively no special writing on ethics and training, behavior, aspects of mysticism, or other subjects, and the works that have been available have been mostly old.

With the triumph of the Islamic revolution and our belief in the possibility of exporting the revolution to Lebanon and other Arab nations, we thought it appropriate to make use of the opportunity provided by the triumph of the Islamic revolution and the blessed fountain of ethical and mystical writings in Persian, to translate and publish some of the Persian books, and to distribute them in the Arab countries.

[Question] So far how many works and primarily which thinkers have you translated and printed?

[Answer] So far we have translated about 250 works from Persian, all but five or six of which have been printed. Among the authors of the translated books may be mentioned His Holiness Imam Khomeyni (peace be upon him), Grand Ayatollah Khamene'i, Martyr Beheshti, Martyr Motahari, Martyr Bahonar, Martyr Dastgheyb, Ayatollah Amoli, Ayatollah Mozaheri and others. Among the non-clerical Iranian thinkers, we have also translated several books by the late Dr. 'Ali Shari'ati. We have also made use of the works of other individuals such as Dr. Qa'emi.

Let it not go unsaid that in the very first years of the revolution we reprinted the books *Witness, Prayer,* and *Yes, This Is How It Was,* by Dr. Shari'ati, which had already been translated. It must be mentioned that our most important criteria in translating books is that they be useful, that there be no similar works in the Arab region, and the affect they have in spreading the revolution.

[Question] At what level is the quality of the translation and printing of the books of interest to you?

[Answer] The quality of the translations differs in certain respects, in that the level of each translation depends on the value of each book. For example, for ordinary readers, an effort is made to use more fluent and universally understandable translations. Specialist prose is used for special books. For example, there have been good translations of the books of Martyr Dastgheyb, but since these books were written for ordinary people, we translated them at that level. Likewise, our very good translations are confined to the works of His Holiness Imam Khomeyni (peace be upon him).

As for the quality of the printing, compared to Iran's standards, the printing of the translations of these works is of better quality; we have had no books that were not printed well. If the size of the book is more than 150 pages, we bind it with gold stamping.

[Question] How have these books been received among the common people and among the intellectuals of the Arab countries?

[Answer] The first printing of each of these books is between 3,000 and 5,000, and in view of the limitations in Lebanon's market, this is good circulation. Of course some of these books, such as the writings of Imam Khomeyni (peace be upon him) and Martyr Dastgheyb, have been reprinted repeatedly. Therefore, public reception has been very good, because to a certain extent they have been able to fill a gap. It has become customary for a number of these works to be found in the homes of every Muslim, and especially every committed Shi'ite in Lebanon, the Hijaz, Kuwait, Bahrain, and elsewhere.

As for the Arab intellectuals, some of them, and especially the ones who have sensed a gap because of the unavailability of these works, have welcomed them, but some, who have seen them as a nuisance or as competition, have also opposed them. Of course this very sense of opposition is also something good, because it has persuaded many of them to take courage and write in areas that were first discussed in the translations of Persian books.

It is necessary to mention that about one-third of the works we have published are sold in Lebanon, and the remaining books are sold in the other Arab countries, especially the nations on the Persian Gulf littoral and at book fairs in countries like Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, and elsewhere.

[Question] Other than yourself, who else in Lebanon and the other Arab nations is engaged in translating and printing Persian books?

[Answer] As a group, no other aggregate exists in these nations, but in terms of individual work, there are other individuals who are also doing such work. Of course the reason we do not work with some of these translators is that we do not have enough confidence in them, because unfortunately in Lebanon there is no official or group to monitor translating or publishing. Therefore, many of the books published are either not useful, against religion, or very bad translations.

For example, after years of work on the book *Stories of the Clergy* by the late Tonokaboni, which we translated and researched, we noticed that it had already been translated without using scientific procedures, was published despite the fact that it was full of mistakes. For this reason, the copy we had in mind was not printed.

[Question] What is your method of cooperation with the Iranian writers and with the translators and publishers on your side of the contract?

[Answer] Currently, because the publishing is the responsibility of the Lebanese publishers, we do not undertake directly to obtain permission from the Iranian writers. Of course in cases where the publishers themselves ask us to do this, we do this task. For example, this is the way it was done with regard to the works of Mr. Makarom Shirazi and Ayatollah Amoli. With regard to the translator, initially we give about 10 pages of each work to a specific translator to translate, and then we critique that translation. If the translator shows himself to be competent to translate that particular work, we give him the book. After the translation, we give the text to our editor. After the editing and comparing the Persian text with the Arabic translation, we give it to our Arabic language professor for correction with respect to the Arabic grammar. Of course during the translation we provide our group with resources and special Persian and Arabic dictionaries so the work will be done better.

With regard to the printing, our procedure is to publish at the beginning of each year a list of the books of interest to us along with a short text about the characteristics and attributes of each of these books and distribute it among the Lebanese publishers we consider reputable. After studying our conditions, the interested publishers sign specific agreements to receive the book in a specific period of time in return for paying the expenses. It is after these contracts that the translation stages begin. It is clear that in addition to helping with the printing of our books, which we ourselves cannot print, this procedure also creates a kind of competition among the publishers. In this regard an example is the works of Martyr Dastgheyb, which we translated exclusively for a Lebanese publisher. At the invitation of the other publishers, it was translated and printed again.

[Question] So far what help have the Ministry of Guidance and other Iranian cultural organizations given you?

[Answer] So far none of the Iranian organizations has given us the least bit of help. During these six years no one has even asked who printed and translated into Arabic the 250 books and some 1,000 Persian articles. It is clear that our goal is not exclusively commercial. Rather, to the extent of our abilities, we wanted to have some share in the export of the Islamic revolution and the orthodoxy of the people of the House of God (peace be upon them).

However, we expected to have some resources to be made available to us and at least to have a group of our colleagues be invited to one of the Festivals held by Iran's Ministry of Guidance in consideration of their labors. Apart from all of these things, we expect some of these tasks to be regulated to put a stop to mistaken, wrong and defective work in these areas. This regulation is essential to maintain respect for the culture of Persian. For clarification, I will give some examples:

The first book I translated was the book *Astonishing Stories* by Martyr Dastgheyb. This book has so far been reprinted twice. With the prohibition, only 5,000 copies of it were sold in Saudi Arabia, but another translation of this book was printed in Lebanon and distributed in Iran. It was altered. In addition to the fact that 50 of the stories were omitted, it was translated in such a way that it is in violation of Shi'ite beliefs. Likewise the book *The Koran, Door to Knowledge of God* was printed in Lebanon with a very bad translation. Since the cover of the book makes no mention of the fact that it is a translation, the uninformed Arabic-speaking reader is left to assume that the translation's weak prose is the original written by His Holiness Imam Khomeyni (peace be upon him).

Another example was a book by Mohammad ibn 'Abd ol-Wahab, rejecting Shi'ism and the Zaydi sect. We saw that it was being sold at a book fair for Iranian books. Yet as we know, Mohammad ibn 'Abd ol-Wahab is opposed to all the sects in Shi'ism and Sunnism, and his books are banned even in the non-Shi'ite Arab countries. In Iran, however, the cradle of knowledge and the Islamic revolution, it was being sold inside the book fair with the permission of the Ministry of Guidance.

[Question] With your permission, we would like to discuss Lebanon's printing and publishing industry. Please discuss this subject.

[Answer] In Lebanon there are more than 100 reputable publishers. In addition to the textbooks, each year they print and publish a large number of other books. In the Arabic language alone, just in the area of ideological and Shi'ite subjects, each year between 150 and 200 new books are printed. The average book printing in Lebanon is between 3,000 and 5,000 volumes for the first edition, mostly in the Arabic language, followed by French and then English. It is necessary to mention that only 25 percent of the books published in Lebanon are the works of Lebanese writers. The rest are by writers from other countries in the world.

The people of Lebanon are habitual readers, and even the civil war and the daily problems of the last few years have not reduced the number of readers of books and publications, although because of these conditions the public's attention and interest in books has been drawn towards books on politics, the press, and basically news issues. With regard to the prices of the books published in Lebanon, I must say that in our country the finished cost of each book has increased 40 to 100 percent, and in addition to that, the price on the back cover reflects the costs of shipping, customs and other costs associated with the other Arab nations. For this reason, even in the country of Lebanon itself one can sometimes buy a book at less than the price on the back cover.

[Question] In your view, what is the situation with the publication of books in Iran, compared to the one in Lebanon?

[Answer] Compared to Lebanon, with regard to publishing resources Iran has less equipment, and with regard to publishing management, it is in a much lower position. This second matter is so important that in Lebanon publishing management is more important than resources. The reason for this is that in Lebanon publications are considered an industry and a specialist task, and many issues are given consideration because of this very specialist outlook. For example, if 10,000 volumes of a book are printed in Lebanon and 8,000 are to be exported, while quality of the book is maintained, there is a difference between the books to be sold in Lebanon and the ones to be exported in terms of the type of paper, the weight and the thickness of the volumes, while in Iran, regardless of the need and the interest of the readers, the entire printing of a book is done with one type of paper.

Likewise, changes must be made based on the tastes of the readers, the technical procedures, the kind of typesetting, the editing procedures and other matters. For example, if we print a book for Marrakesh, Tunisia and Algeria, this must be done in a way that is appropriate for those countries. Likewise, attention must be given to the titles of the books, especially in sensitive areas. For example, we translated a book entitled *1,000 Questions* by Martyr Da[illegible]gheyb. Naturally, it did not have 1,000 questions. This title was chosen to show abundance, but in view of the fact that the Arab reader might not have noticed this point and might have misunderstood, and in view of the book's content, which was mostly about beliefs and concepts, we chose the title *Beliefs and Concepts* for the Arabic translation.

[Question] In view of the printing resources the Lebanese publishers have, is it economical to publish books from other countries in Lebanon?

[Answer] Naturally it is economical for many countries. Because of the legal means available and the superior printing quality in Lebanon, many publishers in Arab countries order their books printed by Lebanese publishers. However, because of the long distance, the shipping problems and the lack of direct shipping routes between Iran and Lebanon, this is not economical for Persian books. Of course this judgment pertains mostly to the printing of books in the Persian language. Otherwise, with regard to the printing of Arabic translations of these books, most of whose readers are naturally outside of Iran, my view is that the publication of these works in Lebanon with the investment and the responsibility of Lebanese publishers, is essential. This is because in this circumstance, making use of the competition among publications, there will be a cost savings; also these publishers themselves will find the way to resolve the existing sensitivities in some of the Arab nations and overcome the prohibitions on the importation of Iranian works.

In this regard, notice that under current conditions a number of Iranian institutions such as the Institute to Publish the Works of Emam Khomeyni (peace be upon him), because of these very problems, send their books free by mail to foreign institutions and individuals. Their capital is thereby constantly decreasing. Yet it would be enough for this procedure to be supervised by others or by a branch of the Iranian publications in other parts of the world, such as Beirut, London, Karachi or elsewhere.

[Question] What is your view concerning the book fairs in Iran?

[Answer] It is a good thing to hold these books fairs, which began after the Islamic revolution, but unfortunately there are obvious problems in the management of Iran's book fairs. These lead to wasted time for the public and for officials. One of these problem is the way foreign books are sold. If appropriate lists were printed and distributed among the intended individuals and at special prices that will be set, many problems could easily be solved through direct sales of the books at the book fairs. Another problem is that every year a number of buyers complain to the Lebanese publishers because the books they order arrive late. Apparently they see the problem as originating on our side, yet one month after the book fairs end these publications send all of the books to Iran, even though they do not receive their money until one month before the next book fair, meaning 11 months later!

Another thing is that some publications by foreign publishers are needed extensively by Iranian book stores. In such cases, using the opportunity provided by the book fairs, contracts could be signed by the two sides, yet because of the existing limitations, such a thing is not possible in Iran.

In any case, in holding the Iranian book fairs one can make use of the experiences of other book fairs in the world, such as the ones in Cairo, Beirut and Europe.

[Question] I thank you for the opportunity you have given us.

Iran: Communications Infrastructure, Development Viewed

96LH0195A Tehran IRAN NEWS in Persian 7 Apr 96 p 3

[FBIS Translated Text] Through great government investment, the nation's communications system, as one of the main elements of the infrastructure for development, has achieved striking successes in the years since the Islamic revolution. The experts believe that in recent years many needs have been met in this matter.

At the end of 1357 [20 March 1979] the total number of telephones installed in the country was 1,165,677. During the years following the Islamic revolution, with the installation of 5,154,323 numbers, the number of installed telephones increased to more than 6 million. On this basis, the existing number of installed telephones grew more than 400 percent.

At the end of 1357, the number of telephones assigned to the public and to applicants was 8,350,000, and with the issuance of more than 4,100,000 numbers, performance in the years since the triumph of the Islamic revolution grew about 500 percent compared to the previous years.

In view of the government's earnestness in creating welfare and service resources for the rural areas, significant activities have been carried out in the rural areas in the communications sector. The total number of rural areas with telephone communications at the end of 1357 was no more than 312, and with telephone communications being given to 10,429 rural areas in the years 1357 - 1374 [21 March 1978 - 20 March 1996], an average of 12 rural areas per week have obtained phone services.

Today one of the most important characteristics of a country's communications system is the availability of a long-distance network. On this basis, with the activities in the years since the triumph of the Islamic revolution, the number of transfer channels and the number of STD channels have multiplied 10 and 16 times over, respectively, compared to the years before the revolution. In the establishment of international communications, performance since the Islamic revolution has produced growth of 900 percent.

Until the triumph of the revolution, there had been no activity in creating information transfer networks and mobile telephone networks, but at the end of 1374 [20 March 1996] the data transfer network had 11,200 X-25 switches, and the mobile telephone network had 12,000 subscribers.

Until the Islamic revolution, the production of communications equipment was limited to the production of EMD electro-mechanical switches, table-top telephones, and some communications equipment parts. After the revolution, however, especially since 1368 [21 March 1989 - 20 March 1990], there has been a complete change in the technology of communications equipment production, and there has been significant use of advanced equipment, especially with the digital innovations.

Iran: Concrete Output To Reach 20 Million Tons

96LH0225A Tehran KAR VA KARGAR in Persian 24 Apr 96 p 4

[FBIS Translated Text] Economic Service—The Ministry of Industries general director of non-metallic minerals said: With a 4 percent increase in production compared to the year 1373 [21 March 1994 - 20 March 1995], the nation's concrete production last year reached to 17.6 million tons.

In an interview with IRNA on Tuesday, Engineer 'Abbas Safakish predicted that with utilization of the new units, the nation's concrete production will reach 20 million tons by the end of this year [20 March 1997].

He discussed the beginning of concrete exports. He said: Last year about 745,000 tons of slag and concrete valued at $11 million was exported to the nations on the Persian Gulf littoral, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.

He said: If there is no shortage of concrete supply on the domestic market, the units that produce it can export up to ten percent of their production, meaning two million tons, to obtain the foreign exchange they need for the current year.

He said with respect to the foreign exchange market for the units under the ministry: If conditions for these units to export are created, they will be able to obtain 80 percent of the foreign exchange they need through exports.

The Ministry of Industries general director of non-metallic minerals said: In view of the fact that as of the first half of the month of Farvardin this year [21 March - 5 April 1996] the Central Bank has paid the foreign exchange earned through exports by the companies, it is hoped that measures will be taken as soon as possible to set the foreign exchange rations of the units, for the purpose of delivering foreign exchange to them.

The Ministry of Industries general director of non-metallic minerals said: Last year 165,000 tons of packed glass was produced in the country, and it is expected that this year the nation's production of packed glass will reach 195,000 tons.

He said: Most of the medicinal glass needed in the country, such as 15, 20, 60 and 120-cc medicinal glass and penicillin glasses, were imported until last year, while they are now produced domestically and the foreign exchange needed to import them is saved.

Safakish discussed the improvement and progress in the nation's glass industry. He said: The glass needed by the Ministry of Energy for water and electrical contours, 2

which also used to be imported, is now provided by domestic producers.

He said: Last year 230,000 tons of glass cups were produced, and for the first time $2.5 million worth of this product was exported. It is expected that the nation's production this year of glass cups will reach 25,000 tons and its export value will reach $4 million.

The Ministry of Industries general director of nonmetallic minerals discussed the situation with the production of automobile glass. He said: Most vehicle safety glass is now imported, but when the two floating glass projects go into operation, it is expected that in addition to meeting domestic needs, surplus production will be exported.

He said: The research units in the companies producing glass cups have succeeded in producing colored reflective glass such as britz [as published] and smoked glass. It is hoped that mass production of these products will begin this year.

Continuing, Safakish added: Activities have begun to produce and cut crystal containers, and it is expected that by the end of the current year [20 March 1997] we will obtain results in the production of products of this kind.

He said with respect to the nation's tile production industry: Last year 46 million square meters of tile was produced, of which 5.5 million square meters valued at $16 million was exported to the nations of the Persian Gulf littoral, Europe and the newly independent republics of the former Soviet Union. Marketing has also begun for the export of tiles to the Southeast Asian nations.

It is expected that with the completion and utilization of development projects now under construction, the amount of tile produced in the country will increase to 120 million cubic meters in the years to come.

Safakish said 40,000 tons of medical china was produced in the country last year, and he predicted that this year 45,000 tons of medical china will be produced in the country.

Last year the value of the exports in this sector was $2.5 million, and it is expected to reach $3 million this year.

He said with regard to the country's asbestos production: With the startup of a 30,000-ton unit to produce asbestos pipes, it is expected that the country's production of this product will increase from 420,000 tons to 450,000 tons.

Iran: SAFF Surveys Readers

96LA0231B Tehran SAFF in Persian No 192, 21 April-20 May 96 INSERT

[FBIS Translated Text] Another year was added to the life of SAFF magazine, which has had many ups and downs, and the colleagues on this magazine are striving, as in the past years, to present a suitable magazine to the brave combatants of the Military of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Clearly, to publish a good quality magazine for the personnel of the Military of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the cooperation and comments of the readers of this magazine are needed. Hence, the following form has been devised, and we ask you honorable readers to answer the questionnaire carefully and send the form by the end of Khordad [20 June] this year to Tehran, Dr. Shari'ati Street, Shahid Qoddusi Intersection, Joint Military Headquarters, Military Ideological-Political Organization, Office of the Deputy Director for Propaganda and Public Relations, SAFF Magazine, or P.O. Box 11365-1714.

But, before you answer the questions in this questionnaire, we must inform you of certain points regarding the publication situation of SAFF.

After the increase in prices in 1372 [21 March 1993-20 March 1994] caused a halt in the publication of the magazine for all the personnel of the Military of the Islamic Republic of Iran at 50 rials [R], the possibility of publishing the magazine at the level of circulation of the number of the military personnel relying on the government budget was also eliminated, because a large budget for this purpose would be required, and certainly if the fate of the magazine did not become independent of the government budget, it would face serious problems.

Hence, in order to publish the magazine and be sure of its survival, basic economic planning had to be done to separate the fate of the magazine from the existing economic problems in the country.

This planning was undergone with the efforts of the honorable officials of the Ideological-Political Organization, and after the price was increased to R500, in order to prevent any imposition and compulsion to subscribe to the magazine, it was decided that SAFF should be sent only to personnel who have voluntarily subscribed. Hence, at the present, SAFF magazine is published independent of the government budget, and even though the cost exceeds the present price of the magazine, steps are being taken not to have a price increase, God willing, and to continue to offer the magazine to the honorable subscribers at R500.

We hope that your cooperation will result in the rise in the quantity and quality of SAFF magazine.

1. Age
2. Sex
3. Level of education and job specialization
4. In your opinion, is there a need to establish relations between the military personnel and civilians?

A. Yes	B. To some extent	C. No

5. Which medium do you consider more effective in establishing this relationship?

A. Magazine	B. Radio and television	C. Both

6. In your opinion, as a magazine for the military, has SAFF been able to meet the needs of this stratum of the society in terms of military, political, and cultural information?

A. Yes	B. To some extent	C. No

7. Which of the following selections do you consider to be "the mission of SAFF magazine"?
A. Reflecting the views and problems of the military personnel
B. Raising the level of scientific information of the personnel
C. Raising the level of ideological information of the personnel
D. Raising the level of political awareness of the personnel
E. Raising the level of public and social information of the personnel
F. Creation of a form of recreation and entertainment for the personnel
G. All of the above
8. If the magazine has not been successful in its role and mission, what do you consider the reason? (Write your reason briefly.)
9. What parts of the magazine do you prefer?
A. Military, B. Ideological, C. Political, D. Interviews and conversations, E. Social and cultural, F. News and events, G. Competitions and entertainment.
10. In your opinion, in which of the following forms should the magazine be published?
A. Biweekly, B. Monthly, C. Bimonthly, D. Quarterly

Write your reasons briefly.

11. In your opinion, which of the following should be added to the magazine?
A. Answers to letters, B. Humorous material, C. War stories, D. Presentation of reviews of published military books, E. Interviews with combatants in the units stationed on the borders, F. If you have other ideas, please add.
12. Considering that correct information given to the military personnel concerning the political issues of the day is most important, how can SAFF as a magazine for the personnel of the Military of the Islamic Republic of Iran work to this end?
A. Interviews with political thinkers
B. Publishing articles on political issues
C. Introducing and reviewing books written on the political issues of the day

If you have any other ideas in mind, please indicate briefly.

13. What part of the magazine do you consider expendable and able to be omitted?
14. In order for SAFF magazine to be able to play a more effective role in the press community of the country, what would you suggest?
15. Is the style of writing of SAFF magazine fluent and comprehensible?

A. Yes	B. To some extent

16. SAFF is published at the beginning of every month. In which city do you receive the magazine and usually after how many days?
17. How do you receive SAFF? What would you suggest to improve the distribution of the magazine?
18. Considering the price of 50 tumans for the magazine at the present, do you regard this price as inexpensive or expensive? What price would you suggest? (Write your reasons)
19. Which of the following would you suggest to establish mutual relations between SAFF and its readers?
A. Sending letters by readers and responding to them by the personnel of the magazine

B. Inviting the readers to offer opinions and suggestions regarding the magazine
C. Calling the readers of the magazine for suggestions for discussions and exchanges of views
D. All of the above

If you have other suggestions, please write them.

20. As of the last question, please write in detail all your suggestions, comments, and criticisms regarding all matters related to SAFF magazine.

Iran: April-May SAFF News, Events

96LA0231A Tehran SAFF in Persian No 192, 21 April-20 May 96 pp 52-53

[FBIS Translated Text]

Graduation Ceremonies of the 10th Ideological Instructors Training Course

The graduation ceremonies were held for the 10th Ideological Instructor Training Course of the Training Center of the Ideological-Political Office of the Ground Forces of the Military of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

In these ceremonies, which were held in the presence of Hojjat ol-Eslam Quchani, the director of the Ideological-Political Organization of the Military, and Hojjat ol-Eslam Imani, the director of the Ideological-Political Office of the Ground Forces, students of the 10th Instructors Training Course graduated and were sent to the related units to perform the grave duty of teaching in the ideological-political centers of the military.

In these ceremonies, the director of the Ideological-Political Organization of the Military in a detailed speech explained the role and place of the teacher, and, enumerating the spiritual advantages of spreading Islamic knowledge in the society, he called on the students to understand the lofty position of the teacher.

At the conclusion of the ceremonies, the distinguished personnel of this course and also the professors of the training center were given gifts by the director of the Ideological-Political Organization.

Satellite Communication Seminar at Martyr Sattari University

The first Satellite Communication Seminar was held at the Martyr Sattari University in the presence of General Baqa'i, the commander of the Air Force; a group of experts and professors of Khajeh Nasiroddin Tusi University; the deputy director of maintenance and operations for long-distance communication of the Communication Company; and a group of satellite communication experts of Martyr Sattari University.

In this seminar, which was held for the purpose of examining the function, use, and efficiency of the communication system in terms of information outreach, shipping, reconnaissance, and strategic areas from the military perspective, a total of 50 scientific articles were sent to the Administrative Office of the seminar, from which 16 articles were selected and presented in the seminar.

This seminar concluded its work by emphasizing the necessity of expert coordination to present appropriate solutions for optimizing the use of satellite communication networks.

Sixth Fighter Unit Personnel Throw Flowers

The Sixth Ideological-Political Fighter Unit, in a joint endeavor with the command of this unit, held a joint reveille on 19 Bahman [8 February], Air Force Day, and with the coordination of the Second Naval Zone of the Military threw flowers at the self-sacrificing personnel of the Air Force stationed on this base.

In these ceremonies that were held in the presence of the representative of the religious guardian and Friday imam of Bushehr, the governor general, the military and law enforcement personnel, the ideological-political directors, the head of the Islamic Propagation Organization of Bushehr, and a group of other national and military authorities, the Friday imam of Bushehr made a speech.

Inauguration of the Equipped Medical Information Outreach at the Medical Sciences University of the Military

In the presence of General 'Ebadat, the acting commander of the Ground Forces, as well as a group of deputies and officials of the Ministry of Health, Treatment and Medical Education, the first equipped information outreach network of the Medical Sciences University of the Military of the Islamic Republic of Iran was inaugurated and put into operation. In these ceremonies, General 'Ebadat in a speech commended and thanked the physicians and officials of the university for starting the operation of this extensive system.

It is noteworthy that this computerized network is used for information outreach and contains categorized information from 3,500 reputable medical journals. Also, this system, by establishing connections with the Internet and World Wide Web system, provides researchers and physicians with the latest medical information in the world.

It should be mentioned that with the operation of this center, the information needs of all the physicians and medical science researchers of the Armed Forces will be met.

The Ramazani Koran Project Competition at the Ninth Fighter Unit

The Ideological-Political Office of the Ninth Fighter Unit held a series of Koran recitation competitions in the presence of 100 persons selected from the Ramazani Koran Project classes at the Karbala Mosque. The Ninth Fighter Unit of the Air Force of the Military of the Islamic Republic of Iran held a Night with the Koran on the occasion of the Spring of the Koran and the Islamic Revolution Victory celebrations as well as Air Force Day, with the participation of all the military and law enforcement forces of the province of Bushehr and several military and national authorities.

At the conclusion of these ceremonies, the guests participated in the fast-breaking banquet of the Ideological-Political Office of this base.

Meeting of the Commander and the Director of the Ideological-Political Office of the Navy With the Commanders of This Force

On the occasion of the arrival of the new year, Commodore 'Ali Shamkhani and Hojjat ol-Eslam Mohammad Saleh Ahmadvand met with the acting commander, deputies, officials, and commanders of the units of the Command Headquarters of the Navy of the Military of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

In this meeting, Commodore Shamkhani offered congratulations on the arrival of the new year, enumerated the most important activities of last year for the audience, and emphasized the issue of conservation as a priority in the affairs and efforts for extensive research toward self-sufficiency in all areas. In connection with the welfare issues of the personnel of the Navy, he said: In 1375 [20 March 1996-20 March 1997], the Navy will take positive steps in providing personnel with housing and taking care of other welfare/assistance problems.

Commodore Shamkhani, in another part of his speech, explained the combat, operational readiness, and arms situation of this force as at their best, and, regarding the Navy of the Islamic Republic of Iran as the superpower of the region, he considered this force to be the most alert navy in the sensitive region of the Middle East.

In the conclusion of these ceremonies, Commodore Shamkhani thanked the hard-working personnel of the Navy for their efforts last year.

The Koran Meeting at the 92nd Armored Division of Ahvaz

The magnificent ceremonies of a Night with the Koran were held at the 92nd Armored Division of the Ground Forces of the Military stationed in Khuzestan with the presence of Koran reciters and memorizers.

In these spiritual ceremonies that were held at the Amir al-Mo'menin Mosque of the 92nd Armored Division and in the presence of a group of officials from the province, Ahmad Dabbagh, a memorizer of the whole Koran; 'Abbas Imam Jom'eh, an international reciter and secretary of the Supreme Koran Council; Hoseyn Yazdanpanah, the distinguished reciter of the country; the Tavashih-e Shohada and Al-Zahra groups of Ahvaz; and Saheb ol-Amr of Abadan recited the Koran, this human-building book, and provided special warmth to this spiritual gathering.

Entry of Two Navy Training Ships to the Oman and Pakistan Ports

Within the framework of the agreements and in connection with expanding the military recitations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Oman and Pakistan, two training ships, Khark and Lavan, entered the ports of Masqat and Karachi and were welcomed by military officials of those two countries and members of the Embassies of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

This friendly visit of the training ships of the Navy of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the ports of Oman and Pakistan took nine days, and during this period, the commanders of these ships met with the navy commanders of Oman and Pakistan and emphasized the expansion of military relations, especially with regard to naval training issues of the region.

It is noteworthy that the training ships, Khark and Lavan, after the international training journey and thousands of nautical miles and after the students acquired practical training success, entered the sacred waters of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Persian Gulf and were welcomed by the high ranking officials of the province of Hormozgan.

Wrestling Matches in Khorramabad

On the occasion of the 18th anniversary of the magnificent victory of the Islamic revolution, a series of wrestling matches between the 84th Lorestan Division, the children of the military personnel residing in the organizational Badrabad Housing of the city of Alashtar, and the Open Islamic University of the Khorramabad Unit were held in the Wrestling Hall of the 84th Division.

At the conclusion of these matches, ranking first were Asghar Ramazanian from the 84th Division, in the 48-kg weight category; Daryush Hemmati, in the 52-kg weight category; and Sa'id Asadi from the 84th Division, in the 57-kg weight category; Ahmad Reza Ashnanegar from the Open Islamic University, in the 62-kg weight category; Behruz Karami from the Open Islamic University, in the 68-kg weight category; Iraj Soleymani from the Open Islamic University, in the 74-kg weight category; 'Ali Ashraf Moradi from the 84th Division, in the 90-kg weight category; 'Ezzatollah Asadi from the Open Islamic University, in the 100-kg weight category; and Morad Valipur from the 84th Division, in the over-100-kg weight category.

Awards to the Winners of the Great Koran Fajr Competition

The awards ceremonies for 150 of the most distinguished participants in the great "Koran Fajr" Competition, which is held every year by the Ideological-Political Office of the Joint Headquarters, were held in the Martyr Qaram Prayer Hall of the Joint Headquarters and prizes were granted by Hojjat ol-Eslam Movahhedi-Golpayegani.

In these ceremonies, which were held in the presence of a group of the personnel of the Joint Headquarters, the deputy director of propagation and the Public Relations Office of the Joint Headquarters presented a brief report on the seven-year Koran operation of this office and said:

Inspired by the directives and statements of the grand leader and the commander-in-chief of the forces, Grand Ayatollah Khamene'i, and also in connection with achieving a Koranic army, the Ideological-Political Office of the Joint Headquarters during the blessed month of Ramazan, in addition to the holding of training classes and Koran sessions, holds special written competitions on the Koran as a long-term program.

In another part of his speech, he referred to the extensive reception of the personnel of the Joint Military Headquarters and their honorable families to this Koranic program and said: Many of the cultural, propagational, and academic centers receive the Koranic pamphlets published by this center every year and take steps to hold Koran competitions in their own offices and in this way bring vast publicity to the military.

The Nohad 65th Division Boxing Team Shines in the Boxing Matches of the Blessed 10 Days of Fajr

The Nohad 65th Division boxing team succeeded in gaining third rank in the Ground Forces Boxing Matches held in the presence of 12 ground forces and other independent teams at the Soldiers Club. The first and second ranks were acquired by the Ground Forces and the Open Martyr Shirudi teams.

In the individual classification, Farhad Khandan from the Nohad 65th team, in the 75-kg weight category, ranked first and was selected as best boxer in these matches.

Captain Hushang Amini-Foqaraparast, the coach of this team, pointed out the uses and advantages of this sport and also its suitability to the spirit of the soldiers, regarding it as an essential need for every efficient, combat-ready soldier.

Athletic Matches in the Navy

Ceremonies in the presence of Commodore Shamkhani, the commander of the Navy; Commander Sabur, the athletic director of the General Headquarters of the Armed Forces; Hojjat ol-Eslam Ahmadvand, the director of the Ideological-Political Office of the Navy; and a group of high-ranking commanders of the Army and Guard Corps, in the hall of the Soccer League of the Navy Regions of the Military of the Islamic Republic of Iran, concluded with the final game between the Athletic and Personnel Services teams.

In these ceremonies, Commodore Shamkhani spoke on the role of sports in physical and spiritual health and also the use of sports among the personnel of the Navy and their families and said: There are programs underway to invest in increasing the athletic equipment and facilities in various fields in the Navy and the military.

It is noteworthy that at the end of the final game, the Athletic team ranked first, by defeating the Personnel Services team 4 to 3. Also, the Ideological-Political team, with a sound and composed game, was awarded the Ethics Cup of the matches.

Also, in the finals of the table tennis matches of the Navy teams, the Air-Sea team ranked first.

It is noteworthy that in other ceremonies, the "Athletes Hall" and also the metal docks of the athletic facilities of Karaj Dam were visited and inaugurated.

Iran: Center for Public Opinion Polling Opens

96LH0224A Tehran KAR VA KARGAR in Persian 24 Apr 96 p 2

[FBIS Translated Text] The deputy minister of culture and Islamic guidance for press and propaganda said: This year the sum of 2.1 billion tumans in credits has been given to publications as subsidies.

Mr 'Ali Akbar Ash'ari, speaking yesterday with reporters, added: The allocation of subsidies to the press has been done based on criteria such as circulation size, number of pages, and the variety and quality of content.

He said: With the measures that have been taken, the paper needed by all publications this year has been provided and there will be no problem of any kind in this regard.

The zinc needed by publications will also be provided to the press at one-third the market price.

Ash'ari then discussed the Third Press Festival in Tehran. He said: Festivals like this will be held this year in the provinces of Fars, Hamadan, Yazd and Khuzestan.

He explained: Following the Iran Press Exposition last year in Lebanon, this year this exposition will also be held beginning 27 Ordibehesht [17 May] in India.

According to him, in the month of Shahrivar [23 August - 22 September] this year, the Symposium on Ethical Like-mindedness for Muslim Newspaper Writers was held in Tehran, attended by newspaper writers from Islamic nations.

The deputy minister of culture and Islamic guidance for press and propaganda discussed the beginning of the compilation of the Communications Encyclopedia. Then he discussed the activities of the Home for Young Newspaper Writers. He said: The activities of this society will begin officially at the same time the Third Press Festival begins.

According to Ash'ari, the National Press Center, which was established last year and has the responsibility of providing information to the press and communications researchers and experts, began its activities officially at the beginning of the current year [21 March].

He also announced that the Ministry of Guidance Center for Evaluating Public Opinion began its official activities concurrent with the Press Festival. In addition to polling the public with regard to the Press Festival, it also studies and analyzes throughout the year the opinions of the public concerning the performance of the government, and gives the results to policy-makers.

The deputy minister of culture and Islamic guidance for press and propaganda discussed the establishment of press guilds. He said: This matter will be discussed and studied during the Press Festival. After the views of the press experts and insiders are collected, we will find appropriate and workable ways to do this.

He said: We welcome any kind of planning with regard to the formation of press guilds.

Pakistan

Pakistan: Official Rules Out Signing CTBT Unilaterally

BK2907110396 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 29 Jul 96 p 11

[Unattributed Report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — The chairman of National Assembly's standing committee on foreign affairs, Maulana Fazlur Rahman, Sunday [28 July] said that like the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Pakistan would never sign Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBI) unilaterally.

He, however, said the Foreign Office was advised not to create confusion over CTBT issue and to use careful words in such statement. The JUI (F) [Jamiat-i-Ulema — Fazlur Rahman] chief vowed that because of the nuclear programme India could not dare to launch any aggressive border movement against Pakistan.

Earlier, Foreign Secretary Najmuddin Sheikh briefed the committee an the next session of UN General Council over CTBT, Afghanistan situation, Kashmir issue and over the Israel's fresh movement to develop friendly and bilateral relations with the neighbouring Islamic countries. Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali, who was supposed to conduct the briefing did not appear because of ailment.

Najmuddin, commenting on the confusion regarding Foreign Office's statement that Pakistan has shifted the stand, said that Pakistan would not sabotage the 40-year struggle of CTBT. He said the ministry had not said that Pakistan would sign the treaty but said that Pakistan would not create any hurdle in the passage of CTBT.

Fazlur Rahman said that Pakistan could not sign CTBT unless all the nuclear powers and threshold nuclear powers (5 + 3) do not sign the treaty. He said unless all the South Asian nations sign, Pakistan could not even think of signing the treaty. The committee was also informed that Pakistan would raise the issue of Kashmir at the UN in the context of human rights violations. The issue of Afghanistan's peace process would also be raised at UN along with the Bosnian issue and extension of the UN Security Council's issue.

Fazlur said the new government in Israel seemed to be prepared to violate Middle East peace policy and the Muslim countries like Syria, Palestine and Lebanon are facing problems as their national security has been threatened. The committee directed the Foreign Secretary to chalk out a multi-dimensional strategy in this connection to raise the Middle Ease peace issue in the next UN session. It was also advised that multidimensional strategy towards ME must help Pakistan in seeking the support of Arab countries on the Kashmir issue.

Pakistan: Opposition Senators Stage Senate Walkout Over Fear of Signing CTBT

BK2607124596 Peshawar THE FRONTIER POST in English 26 Jul 96 p 1

[FRONTIER POST bureau report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — Fearing signing of CTBT (Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty) by Pakistan opposition senators Thursday [25 July], staged a walkout from the Senate and urged upon the PPP [Pakistan People's Party] government, not to implement Americans dictates on vital nuclear and Kashmir issues.

Opposition Leader Raja Zafarul Haq and Spokesman of Independent Group Senator Hafiz Hussain Ahmed, wanted a categorical assurance from the government side about not signing CTBT as India did and flatly refused to sign the same. Minister of State for Law Raza Rabbani, tried his best to satisfy angry opposition members arguing that decision of CTBT, would be made at an appropriate time. He however made it clear that government even did not think to undermine national security.

Raza accused opposition members of politising sensitive issues just for political advantage.

Opposition members however staged a walk-out to register their protest against government's pro-American policies on nuclear and Kashmir issues.

They referred to a categorical statement by Indian Foreign Minister I.K. Gujral in which he had stated that India would not sign CTBT and wanted that Pakistan, should follow its arch and hostile rival by declaring not to sign CTBT unilaterally. Signing of the document unilaterly was just like signing of a death warrant of own, they maintained. Though Raza Rabbani, time and again assured that government would never compromise on country's vital interests.

Opposition senators however expressed fears that Pakistan was going to sign CTBT unilaterally under American pressure and predicted the same fate of Kashmir and other national issues on which government had adopted a compromised stance. They demanded convening of a joint session of both houses of the parliament to evolve ways and means for safeguarding national interests and no decision should be taken before approval of the same by the parliament.

Raja Zafarul Haq was of the view that Pakistan, was on the top of the list of those four countries being pressurised by U.S. for signing CTBT. "But what a pity that our government has adopted apologetic attitude contrary to a clear stance taken by hostile India making clear that CTBT would not be signed by them". He asked Pakistan Government to follow India and declare that there would be no unilaterally signing of CTBT.

Opposition members also accused the government of getting kickbacks in shady deal of old Mirage aircrafts.

Ch Mohammad Anwar Bhinder of PML(N) [Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz)] speaking on admissibility of his adjournment motion said that national exchequer would face a great burden due to purchase of 40 old Mirage aircrafts from France, at a cost of U.S. dollars 120 million plus three million dollars for their overhauling by a French firm, within a period of two years. "Why we are paying a huge amount for aircrafts to be supplied after two years," he posed a question.

Defence Minister Aftab Shahban Mirani defended the deal claiming that no kickbacks were involved in the deal which was transparent by all ways and means. About upgradation and overhauling of these aircrafts by the French firm, Mirani, said Pakistan had very limited rebuilding and overhauling facilities at Kamra.

Pakistan: Beg—Government Has Succumbed To U.S. Pressure on CTBT

BK2907104796 Islamabad THE NATION in English 29 Jul 96 p 3

[Report by Correspondent]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] QUETTA — Chief of Awami Qiyadat Party [AQP] General (Retd) Mirza Aslam Beg declared that the PPP [Pakistan People's Party] government seemed to be ready to sign the CTBT [Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty] and accept the US formula on Kashmir in the wake of immense American pressure, and vowed "his party never let the government compromise on the national interests."

He was addressing a Press conference here on Saturday [27 July]. Besides party's senior leaders, Bahram Khan Marri the provincial president and Altafur Rahman the general secretary were also present on the occasion. Aslam Beg said that there was great pressure on the Government from the US regarding the signing of the CTBT and its planned formula on Kashmir. He said that "I think our government seems to be succumbed to the US pressure." He warned that if the government accepted the dictation of US, it would be detrimental for the country. He declared that Pakistan should not sign the CTBT unless the India conceded to do the same.

The AQP Chief said that after the Gulf War, the United States got its interests protected in the Gulf region and also got Israel recognized to safeguard its vested interests. He said that now US set its eyes on Pakistan to serve its interests in this region as it was more important for it due to bordering several countries. He said that US is following the policy of engagement and containment with the countries having good relations and other states, having strained relations with it respectively. He opposed the oppositions movement against the PPP government and said that the government should be allowed to complete its tenure as the decades old practice of dislodging the governments through unconstitutional means should come to an end. The next general elections should be held under impartial-caretaker government and under an independent Election Commission after amending the constitution like in Bangladesh. While terming the present federal budget of current financial year as "anti-people" he said that it was made on the dictation of IMF and all the conditions of it were accepted. He claimed that Nawaz Sharif, Leader of the opposition, failed to take the people to streets against the present government. He said that the politicians who had strong roots among the people could rise the people through call against the government . He questioned that why the people should sacrifice for the parties or politicians like People's Party and Nawaz Sharif as what good they delivered to them? He said that due to the confrontation between the government and the opposition parties, no healthy legislation was made in the country.

Pakistan: Spokesman Comments on Final Round of Geneva CTBT Talks

BK2807144696 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 28 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The final round of talks on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty [CTBT] is opening in Geneva tomorrow. A draft accord submitted to the 68 nations taking part in the negotiations has already secured the acceptance of Britain, France, Russia, and the United States. China has, however, demanded changes in the draft but said it remains committed to achieving a global test ban as soon as possible.

A Foreign Office spokesman said in Islamabad today that Pakistan supports the CTBT fully but feels that, without complete participation of all the five nuclear powers and three threshold states, it would be meaningless. In an interview with our diplomatic correspondent, he said Pakistan's decision to sign or not to sign the CTBT will be taken at an appropriate time, after the finalization of the text of the treaty and taking into account the position of other countries, especially of our region. He said the foremost consideration would be safeguarding our security interests which Pakistan alone will determine.

Meanwhile, Pakistan will endeavor to ensure that all its concerns regarding substantive and technical aspects of the CTBT are fully covered in the text of the treaty. He said Pakistan's position in the negotiations is guided by its concerns as well as the views of other friendly countries. The Pakistan delegation at the final round of talks on CTBT in Geneva is led by Ambassador Munir Akram.

Pakistan: Spokesman's Statement on Need for 'Universal' CTBT Continues

BK2607103996 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 26 Jul 96 pp 1, 9

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — Thursday [25 July] reiterated that the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) must be both comprehensive and universal.

A Foreign Office statement said the Entry-into-Force provisions of the treaty require ratification by all nuclear-weapon and the nuclear-capable states for it to become effective. "If India decides not to ratify, it would have effectively sabotaged the treaty as it will not be enforceable."

Pakistan's decision to sign or not to sign the CTBT would be taken up at an appropriate time after the finalisation of the text of the treaty and taking into account the position of other countries, especially of our region. "The foremost consideration would be safeguarding our security interests which we alone will determine," the statement said.

The statement said Pakistan will endeavor to ensure that all our concerns regarding the substantive and technical aspects of the CTBT are fully covered in the text of the treaty. Our position in the negotiations is guided by these concerns as well as the views of other friendly and nonaligned countries. Our national interests cannot be best served by prematurely pronouncing one's final position on the CTBT.

It is important to recall that Pakistan together with other nonaligned countries has consistently endeavored to promote the goals of nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation. Pakistan also supports the total elimination of all nuclear tests without any exception and has welcomed the efforts to conclude negotiations on comprehensive Test Ban Treaty by 1996.

Pakistan has participated constructively in the negotiations on the CTBT at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. These negotiations have now entered a crucial stage. The Conference on Disarmament will resume its consideration of the text of the CTBT on July 29, 1996.

India announced on June 20 that it will not sign the CTBT, but would not block the treaty. There has been some confusion in the media about the term 'block' and 'sign' the treaty, the statement added. The text of any proposed treaty has to be adopted by consensus of all members of the Conference on Disarmament before it could be submitted to the United Nations General Assembly. A member not intending to sign the treaty may still allow the text to go forward by not objecting to its transmittal. If, however, a member casts a negative vote, the treaty will be effectively blocked. India had initially stated that while it could not sign the treaty it would not block it.

Recent pronouncements, however, have been more ambiguous. Pakistan, on the other hand, has decided to remain engaged in the negotiations with a view to ensuring that the text of the treaty adequately meets our concerns, the statement said.

"We have urged the international Community to persuade India to reconsider its position and to join the international consensus on banning all nuclear test explosions and all other nuclear explosions. We have also made it adequately clear that CTBT will have no meaning for South Asia if India is not brought on board. The onus for effectively destroying this global initiative would rest on India if it chooses not to sign the CTBT."

Pakistan's position on the issue of nuclear non-proliferation in South Asia is clear and consistent. "We support all efforts to promote non-proliferation, particularly in our region provided these are equitable and non-discriminatory. There is no change in Pakistan's position in this regard, the statement added.

It is important to differentiate the different phases of the conclusion of international treaties. The CTBT is still being negotiated. It will be submitted to the UN General Assembly only, to be followed by phases of signatures, ratification and finally entry into Force.

Pakistan: Presure From 'Major Power' To Sign CTBT Noted

BK2907070596 Rawalpindi NAWA-I-WAQT in Urdu 28 Jul 96 pp 1, 9

[Report by Javed Siddiq]

[FBIS Translated Text] It has been learnt through reliable diplomatic sources that pressure on Pakistan to sign the CTBT [Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty] will be increased in the next few weeks. According to these sources, economic pressure might also be exerted on Pakistan to make it sign the CTBT. Some circles in the federal capital claim that the funds that the IMF was to provide to Pakistan in April this year as a stand-by arrangement have not so far been released.

The IMF delegation that visited Pakistan just before the announcement of the budget had said while talking to the newsmen in Islamabad that another IMF delegation would visit Pakistan right after the budget had been presented, but the delegation has not arrived yet. The Pakistani Government has sent Secretary of Finance Moeen Afzal to Washington so that he can brief the IMF about the budget and have the IMF release the loan it had agreed to earlier. However, nothing can be said with certainty about the visit of the IMF delegation.

Analysts observing the attitude of the IMF say that probably a major power, which is interested in signing the CTBT by September this year, wants to indulge in economic arm-twisting so that Pakistan agrees to signing the treaty. Talks on the new draft of the CTBT will start in Geneva from 29 July. Recently, ambassador Munir Akram, who is representing Pakistan in the CTBT talks, came to Pakistan and briefed the president, the prime minister, and other officials in the Foreign Ministry about the latest situation.

Pakistan: Opposition Pledge To Hold New Elections Within 90 Days

BK2507150996 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 25 Jul 96 pp 1,10

[Report by Tariq Butt]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad: Fifteen political parties Wednesday [24 July] unanimously resolved to pave way for fresh elections within 90 days under a neutral caretaker setup and newly-constituted autonomous Election Commission.

These parties gathered here at the residence of Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain on the invitation of PML-N [Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz)] chief Nawaz Sharif and issued a joint communique (or charge-sheet against the government) on the conclusion of their four-hour long deliberations.

They formed a 15-member committee which will give its report within 10 days, spelling out the collective future course of action.

The communique read out by MQM's [Muhajir Qaumi Movement] Ajmal Dehlvi at a joint news conference said the government must be removed through legal and constitutional means. "One constitutional way of its removal is through an in-house change. But the Constitution contains other powers to do so, which provide for sending a government packing for its unconstitutional actions," Sharif told a questioner.

He referred to article 58(2B) of the Constitution, which gives the President the discretionary powers to dissolve assemblies and dismiss the government. "The President himself is aware of the misdeeds of the government which have brought the nation to the verge of collapse. He should realize the situation and know about his constitutional role to save further destruction of the state institutions," he said.

He said the 15 parties have announced launching of a movement against the government. The communique said it is the Islamic, constitutional, legal, democratic, national and moral duty of all patriotic political forces in and out of the parliament to play a combined role in getting rid of the government, which has lost people's mandate for violating the Constitution.'

Sharif said if the government is not removed, these parties will wage a struggle to oust it on the force of people's power. "We have to use our feet if the government doesn't comply with our demands."

The joint communique said to save the democratic system and strengthen the country the meeting resolved to remove the regime through constitutional means so that elections can be held under a neutral interim government as enshrined under the Constitution through an independent Election Commission (EC).

According to the communique, the President should ensure formation of a neutral EC which should ensure that candidates for the next elections must strictly conform to the criteria laid down for them in article 62 of the Constitution.

The meeting acclaimed the superior judiciary for resisting the "diktat" of the government and acting according to their conscience and the Constitution to uphold the rule of law.

It urged that there should be no unilateral signing by Pakistan on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). The meeting resolved that any roll-back of the nuclear program would be unacceptable. "On the diplomatic front, Pakistan is isolated even among its traditional friends in the region."

The conference concluded that the prevailing situation is extremely dangerous for the nation and the country's future, and the basic reason for this is that the government has miserably failed to perform its duties according to the Constitution and democratic and moral norms.

The communique said the government has subjected the most important pillars of the state — judiciary, parliament and executive — to repeated attacks, shaking the entire state structure. The fourth pillar — the press — has also to face every kind of tactics, including the recent unbearable taxes, it said and also listed failures of the government on the diplomatic front and the worst law and order situation.

According to the communique, all government institutions including banks, DFIs [Development Financial Institution] and autonomous and semi-autonomous corporations are being destroyed by political appointments. The corruption is rampant and even foreign investors have demanded that they will not bring investment unless corruption is controlled, it said.

The meeting was of the opinion that if the present situation continued, Pakistan will become bankrupt. It demanded of the government to step down for its unconstitutional actions and poor performance.

To a question, Sharif said previously these parties have been expressing these views about the government individually, while they have now done so collectively.

The opposition leader said Wednesday's gathering should not be given the name of any alliance, adding that the 15-member committee would decide about these things in its report, which will be laid before heads of these parties for approval.

Answering a question, he said the joint communique would be sent to the Independent Group for studying. After that, it can be contacted, he said. Following were the participants of the meeting: Nawaz Sharif of PML-N, Qazi Hussain Ahmad and Munawwar Hassan of Jamaat-e-islami, Ajmal Khattak and Azam Hoti of ANP [Awami National Party], Mir Abdul Jabbar and Khudae-Noor of Jamhoori Watan Party, Yousuf Masti Khan and Hasil Bizenjo of PNP [Pakistan National Party], KM Azhar of JUP [Jamiat-i-Ulema-i-Pakistan] (Noorani), Sahibzada Fazal Karim of JUP (Niazi), Allama Sajid Naqvi and Wazarat Naqvi of Tehrik Jafria Pakistan, Meraj Mohammad Khan and Khawaja Saleem of Qaumi Mahaz-e-Azadi, Mumtaz Bhutto of United National Front, Maulana Samiul Haq of JUI-S, Zafarullah Khan Jamali of Independent Group and PML-J [Pakistan Muslim League (Jumjo)] (Wattoo group), Ishtiaq Azhar and Ajmal Dehlvi of MQM, Prof. Sajid Mir of Jamiat Ahle Hadith and Sahibzada Arif Ropri of Jama'at Ahle Hadith.

Pakistan: Mirani Refutes Charges of Kickbacks in Mirage Deal

BK2607092496 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 26 Jul 96 p 9

[Report by THE NEWS correspondent]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — The 67th session of the Senate was prorogued sine die here Thursday [25

July]. The session which lasted for about three weeks, held debate on the issues relating to law and order and economic situation in the country.

The house also passed the Pakistan Telecommunication Corporation (Second Amendment) Bill 1996.

During Thursday's proceedings, responding to a point of order of Senator Tariq Chaudhry, the Defence Minister Aftab Shaaban Mirani dismissed the allegations of any kickbacks in Mirage 2000-V deal with France. He said agreement with France has not yet been finalised.

"It is shocking to listen to such remarks," the minister said and assured that he had never issued any statement dubbing Tariq Chaudhry as foreign agent.

Tariq Chaudhry on a point of order said that the defence minister has dubbed him as a RAW [Research and Analysis Wing] agent assuming that India does not want to see Pakistan having Mirage 2000 warplanes and whosoever objects the Mirage deal might have been playing in the hands of the enemy.

Tariq Chaudhry, during a debate, had levelled allegations of kickbacks on the deal for F-16 and Mirage 2000-V fighters planes.

Chaudhry reminded that even the president was on record to say that the price tag of these Mirage fighters are too steep.

While responding to an adjournment motion tabled by Chaudhry Anwar Bhinder, Aftab Shaaban Mirani said 40 Mirage fighters from Sagem will be upgraded and over-hauled within next two years. He also clarified that Kamara has very limited capacity to upgrade and overhaul such aircrafts.

He also assured that the deal is transparent and reminded that Deputy Opposition Leader MNA [Member of National Assembly] Gohar Ayub Khan had admitted the need for these aircrafts when he was invited to a Standing Committee meeting on Defence. He said the 40 aircrafts include Mirage M-5 (34) and M-3 (6).

Earlier talking about the Gilgit incident, Minister for Kashmir and Northern Areas Affairs Afzal Khan assured the House that a judicial inquiry has been ordered into the violence incident and the culprits will be awarded exemplary punishment. No discrimination will be made and the inquiry will be conducted irrespective of political affiliation.

The incident took place when recruitment was made in Gilgit for the scouts force and the situation turned violent and the mob attacked the rest house and set on fire the deputy commissioner's office.

Meanwhile, Deputy Chairman Mir Abdul Jabbar reserved his ruling on a motion moved under House privileges against freezing of development funds of opposition senators for the year 1995-96.

The motion was moved by Dr Javed Iqbal, substantiated by a list issued by the government in which over 53 senators were issued development funds while the rest of them, mostly from the opposition were deprived of this facility.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: 'Reverberations' From Atlanta Terrorism Viewed

BK2907055696 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 29 Jul 96

[Editorial: "Action, Not Rhetoric" — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Reverberations from twin blasts in Atlanta, the Olympic city, are bound to be felt by the G7 as they meet to work out, among other things, ways and means of tackling the new global scourge — political terrorism. In the latest incident, a trash can exploded at a pop concert, leaving up to 200 injured and rows of shattered buildings. Earlier a TWA airliner was blasted in mid-air with 250 persons aboard. This is strongly suspected to be an act of terror.

All this has been taking place in a city which has come under a massive sophisticated security safety net, spread in view of the on-going Olympic games. The perpetrators of these crimes have apparently found loopholes even in such elaborate security apparatuses.

These facts, besides illustrating the guile and reach of terrorists, throw into relief the sorry plight of poor countries such as ours, which are waging a grim struggle against political terrorism of the worst kind with very meagre resources. Terrorism anywhere has to be condemned and the situation in Atlanta draws an empathic response from us, who only last week suffered the trauma of seeing another LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] bomb snuff out the lives of nearly 70 civilians.

However, the time has come to act decisively and unitedly to stamp out the curse of terrorism from our midst. Pious proclamations and loud rhetoric to fight terror at important international fora just would not do. The devastation in Oklahoma and Atlanta should remind the "world's most powerful democracy" and other world powers grouped under G7, that the global scourge of terror demands consistent, concrete, world-wide, united action, to put an end to it. It is no longer the blight of only countries such as ours. And in this effort the West could not afford to be selective. All organizations that are seeking to achieve political ends through terror should be stamped out.

The LTTE, naturally, should be high on the list of organizations which should be thus wiped out for good. Analysts now quite rightly call the LTTE a giant multinational; so sophisticated, slick and far-flung are its operations. It is common knowledge that the so-called 'Tamil diaspora' in the West funds the LTTE's activities through a series of front organizations. It has even infiltrated human rights bodies and media organizations.

Over these years the LTTE has thus spread its tentacles, even as the Western governments looked on. The terror in Atlanta is a reminder that action against such a menace could no longer be postponed.

Sri Lanka: Foreign Minister—Tamil State 'Not Negotiable'

BK2907023996 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 29 Jul 96

[Unattributed report — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The concept of a separate state is not negotiable, emphasised Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar on Sunday [28 July].

He told foreign correspondents in Colombo that third party peace brokers would have no role to play as long as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] remained firm in carving out a homeland in Sri Lanka's north and east. War has become a cult for the Tiger, he said.

"All evidence now points that the Tigers are now for a separate state," the Minister said.

The Minister said that the ball was firmly in the LTTE court. If they want to negotiate a settlement of the north-east conflict, they must meet three conditions laid down by the government — renounce violence, make a substantial laying down of arms, and accept a timebound framework for the peace negotiations and not open-ended.

The LTTE had a political wing like the Irish Republican Army. The LTTE being a guerrilla organisation, has the capacity to take and isolated outpost like Mullaitivu, but, in no way could they retake Jaffna, Lankapuvath reported.

Lankapuvath added: "Today, the army is highly motivated, morale is high and well disciplined. There are almost no human rights violations," the Minister said.

In response to a question regarding Opposition Leader Ranil Wickremesinghe's criticism that he believes that retaking of Jaffna was strategically the wrong thing to do as it outstretches the Sri Lanka Army, also with what was seen at Mullaitivu and the Army now being drawn further south towards Kilinochchi, is it not a danger that the forces will be wiped out.

The Foreign Minister replied, "All the forces? I think it is totally impossible. I totally disagree with the Leader of the Opposition. He is entitled to his view. He is not a military analyst or strategist. He is a politician. As he is fully entitled to do, he is expressing his views and he is making political capital out of the debacle at Mullaitivu which is a very serious blow."

"But, I wish to draw your attention to this fact that because of the neglect of the previous government, in not equipping, arming and motivating the Armed Forces at that time, Jaffna was allowed to become a LTTE stronghold. In fact it became a de facto state."

At the outset, making a statement Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar said this government came into office in August 1994, very much on the platform of negotiating a peaceful settlement of the ethnic problem, that has plagued the country for over a decade.

President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga went up and down the country during the campaign, saying to the people that if she were elected, she would do her best to bring a negotiated settlement of this problem on a political basis.

That course of action which she took required enormous courage, on two counts. One, absolutely simple physical courage, because her father was assassinated when he was prime minister in 1959 and her husband was assassinated in the late 80's. Therefore she took an enormous risk in doing this.

Everybody, even her most virulent critics have to concede that it was a very courageous stand that she took.

Secondly, politically it was very dangerous, because if she misread the mood of the country, if she got that equation wrong, if it turned out, that the Sinhala people, the majority of the country did not want a negotiated settlement and they only wanted war, she would have lost the election. In other words even though after 17 years rule by one party the country was ready for change, she could have blown it, on an issue like this.

But, she read the mood of the country right and when at the Presidential Election, she was elected by 62 percent of the people, a massive vote in an old democratic country like ours, we have been voting solidly and steadily for 60 years, that was a very very impressive mandate that she got.

Mr. Kadirgamar said there was some argument as to what the meaning of the argument was, but there can be no argument about this, that the people were saying, please go ahead and try to negotiate a settlement and bring this to an end by political means.

"Immediately after taking office, we started talks with the Tigers and these talks went on for five or six months."

"There were four rounds of talks if I remember correctly and there was a cessation of hostilities. In April last year, unfortunately, that broke down on April 19, 1995. At that stage it became very clear, if it was not clear before that as far as the LTTE is concerned, they have only one very simple agenda, a very straightforward one, that is a separate state and nothing else."

"So, in April 1995, we were back to war and when we went back to war it was with the determination that the war must be prosecuted as efficiently and purposefully as possible."

"The war had not been prosecuted in that manner in the years gone by. The Army was not properly equipped, its morale was low, its human rights record was very low, it was not an efficient fighting army."

"That situation has changed almost beyond recognition. Today, we have a Sri Lanka Army which is a fighting army, it is a disciplined army and its human rights record has improved beyond the wildest expectations and it is a better equipped army, at enormous cost to the State of course."

"This, I believe is because there has been clear civilian leadership of the armed forces led by the President herself, there has been a degree of motivation which was absent before and there is a feeling that the army is in this battle for a limited purpose, to finish their military duties and then go back home."

"That is the message that the army has been given," Minister Kadirgamar said.

"The most recent events are that Jaffna has been taken, as you know and some 450,000 people have gone back to their homes. They were displaced when the military campaign began, but largely because they were driven away from their homes at gunpoint (by the LTTE), there is clear evidence of this and what is clearest of all is that they flocked back to their homes, because they wanted to go back home. Obviously, there's no place like home, living in tents in the jungles, under trees or under the open sky."

"The Army's record since they re-took Jaffna has been extremely good in regard to getting on with the civilians well and being kind, efficient and there has been an almost total absence of human rights violations."

Mr. Kadirgamar said that the very fact that the civilians have gone back, in such large numbers to their homes in Jaffna, does logically imply a certain renunciation and rejection of the LTTE's position. I do not think in all fairness that it can be said, the Tamil people want to live under the LTTE's rule.

"I think at the moment, what they are really hungering for, is first and foremost to be left in peace in order to recover. They are a people who have been seriously harassed over the last so many years, driven from pillar to post. I think they want a breathing space. They want to re-build their homes, till their lands, send their children to school and it is the duty of the government now and I assure you this is an absolute predominant duty, as we see it, to re-build and restore Jaffna as quickly as possible to bring civilian life back as quickly as possible."

"That requires an enormous amount of money. The President has addressed an appeal to the international donor community for funding. The amount is in the region of 274 million US dollars, a 110 million dollars in the first phase of the operations and the rest for a more large scale operations."

"The international community has shown interest in the plan that has been produced and given to them."

"Human resources were also required. We need people to go up and work there. It is not easy to find them."

"I give you this assurance on behalf of the government that we are absolutely, totally committed to re-building Jaffna and restoring civilian life through a civilian administration as quickly as is possible to do that."

Sri Lanka: Army Launches Campaign on Kilinochchi; Curfew Imposed

BK2607112296 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 26 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Security forces have launched a major operation code-named (Saj Jaya) was launched in the early hours of today with the aim of destroying LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] terrorists and their strongholds in the mainland of the northern province. [sentence as heard]

Troops have been broken off from the defenses of Elephant Pass are advancing in a southern direction. The

LTTE terrorists are offering stiff resistance to the advancing column. However, troops backed by arms, artillery and air cover continue to advance, overcoming terrorist resistance using superior fire power. An indefinite curfew has been imposed in the northern Kilinochchi District and the civilians have been asked to go to safe places. Meanwhile, troops engaged in Operation Thrivida Pahara continue to carry out the operation at the Mullaittivu base which came under LTTE attack last week.

[Hong Kong AFP in English at 1114 GMT on 26 July in a Colombo dateline report, adds the following: "Heavy fighting raged in Sri Lanka on Friday [26 July] as hundreds of troops backed by tanks, artillery and helicopter gunships mounted a major onslaught against Tamil Tiger guerrillas," officials said.

"Infantry soldiers broke out of their defences at the garrison of Elephant Pass in the island's north and advanced towards the town of Kilinochchi, held by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the officials said."

"It is a fairly large operation. The objective is to destroy the terrorist strongholds,' a military spokesman said, adding that an indefinite curfew had been declared in the area and civilians asked to move to safe locations."

"The defence ministry said heavy artillery and helicopters were pounding positions behind rebel lines to support the advancing army columns in the push, code-named Sath Jaya (True Victory)."

"The military earlier called the offensive Hela Bala (Sinhalese Power)."

"The offensive, which came days after the LTTE smashed an army base in the northeast, was the biggest by government forces since they wrested control of the Tiger citadel of Jaffna from the rebels in April-May after five long years."

"There was no immediate reaction from the LTTE, which alleged in an earlier statement that troops were massing at Elephant Pass, the gateway to Jaffna, and shelling targets around Kilinochchi town, inflicting civilian casualties."

"Analysts saw the Friday offensive as a revenge attack for the loss of the garrison at Mullaitivu, where Tigers say they killed 1,208 soldiers and lost 241 of their own fighters after a stunning assault on July 18."

"Sri Lankan opposition leader Ranil Wickremesinghe on Friday branded the debacle at Mullaitivu the worst setback for security forces in the long war against the LTTE. The separatist drive has claimed more than 50,000 lives."

"Wickremesinghe, 47, who heads the United National Party (UNP) which ruled the island from 1977 to 1994, lashed out at the government for refusing to give official confirmation of the military's casualties."

"'Most of the defenders of the camp have been killed — well over 1,000 men and women,' the former premier said. 'This, however bitter it is to all of us, is the worst military defeat that we have suffered in this long campaign."

"Wickremesinghe's statement in parliament came in response to Deputy Defence Minister Anuruddha Ratwatte's claim that the Mullaitivu setback was of no consequence."

"Military sources said hundreds of elite commandos known as 'special forces' who recaptured the Mullaitivu camp Wednesday [24 July] were presently clearing mines and booby traps within the sprawling and now razed garrison."

"'They have found no sign of life,' an officer said."

"Buddhist monks held a mass service in Colombo Friday to invoke blessings for soldiers who perished at Mullaitivu, while families prepared for the funerals of 70 commuters killed in a suspected LTTE train bombing Wednesday."

"Colombo and its suburbs remained under tight security ahead of the funerals of the bomb victims. The Tigers have denied involvement in the bomb attack, but Sri Lankan officials maintain that the LTTE was to blame."

"Police kept up roadblocks here to prevent a backlash against Tamils as mourners poured into the homes of those killed in the train bombing, the worst terror attack in Sri Lanka since 91 people died in a LTTE suicide attack in January."

"Most of the dead in both attacks belonged to Sri Lanka's majority Sinhalese community."

Sri Lanka: Tamil Parties Urge Government To Reach 'Understanding'

BK2907055396 Colombo SUNDAY OBSERVER in English 28 Jul 96

[Report by S. Selvakumar — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tamil Parties feel that both the ruling People's Alliance and the main opposition United National Party [UNP] should come to some understanding if they want to solve the country's ethnic problem by implementing the political package.

"If they are at loggerheads, the ethnic problem will never be solved and the Tamil speaking people of this country will suffer," spokesman for the five party Tamil Alliance and Secretary General of the Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP) Douglas Devananda told THE SUNDAY OBSERVER.

Mr. Devananda acknowledged that the UNP had a political commitment to maintain the unitary state of the country and at the same time find a political solution to the ethnic problem. But the EPDP leader said the Government should remain firm on its current devolution proposals.

Asked to clarify, he cited former President J.R. Jayewardene. "There were so many instances where Mr. Jayewardene implemented what he thought best amid opposition from other parties," he noted in a veiled reference to the Indo-Lanka Accord of 1987.

The EPDP leader said that the government, acting under Emergency Regulations, had implemented several measures for the welfare of the people. "Similarly whether there is opposition or not, now that they have captured the entire Jaffna Peninsula, let the Government appoint an interim administration consisting of people picked from the area," he added. Asked how the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] would react to such an administration, Mr. Devananda argued that the Government "should not bother about the Tigers".

He was very critical of bureaucrats from Colombo being engaged in the rehabilitation work in Jaffna. "These men from Colombo do not know the basic needs of the Jaffna people," he added.

Commenting on the appointment of 10,000 youth from the South to do Samurdhi work in the Peninsula, the EPDP leader said that the people of Jaffna had just been relieved from the clutches of the LTTE and they should be given time and be persuaded to join the Samurdhi Movement.

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